

## PORTABLE LADDER SAFETY

**Note: a) In this procedure “portable ladder” means any ladder that is not fixed in place, and includes a step-ladder.**

**b) Although observing all of the following procedures should make for safe use of portable ladders, it is strongly recommended that for each application you assess the need for the additional use of fall protection (i.e. Body harness).**

1. Inspection and Maintenance. Ladders must be inspected regularly and kept in good condition at all times. Check each ladder for these unsafe conditions:
  - a. Check for broken, cracked or missing rungs, and handrails if equipped with one;
  - b. Check for broken, split, or bent side rails;
  - c. Check wooden ladders for defective or deteriorating areas. Do not use a wooden ladder or stepladder that is painted with any substance other than a transparent coating, (defects may not be visible).
  - d. Check metal ladders for rust or corrosion on all outside surfaces and on the inside of open - ended hollow rungs;
  - e. Check the “feet” of the ladder to make sure that they are in good condition. The bottom must have a good anti-slip surface on it.
  - f. Check to make sure that the connections between the rungs and the side rails have not come loose.
  - g. on an extension ladder, make sure that the locks are in place and working properly;
  - h. Never use a ladder that is in an unsafe condition. Tag “Do Not Use” on defective ladders and take it to the ‘maintenance dept.’ and inform them about the unsafe condition. They will then decide if it can be repaired or if it must be cut up and discarded.

2. Always select the correct ladder for the job. Selecting the correct “size” and “type” of ladder is your first step to safety.
  - a. Select the correct size (length) of ladder so that you will never need the last two rungs to reach your work area. The ladder should extend about 3’ above its contact with a work platform or roof surface when using the ladder to access.
  - b. Select the right “type” of ladder. The ladder’s “type”, (indicated on the ladders’ label), tells how much weight it can support. Remember when you are choosing a ladder, that it has to hold your weight plus the weight of any tools and materials you are carrying.
    - i) Type 1A - Extra - heavy industrial ladder: 300 lbs.
    - ii) Type 1 - Heavy - duty industrial ladder: 250 lbs.
    - iii) Type 2 - Medium - duty commercial ladder: 225 lbs.
    - iv) Type 3 - Light - duty household ladder: 200 lbs.
3. When setting up and using portable ladders always follow these safety procedures:
  - a. always follow all (Company)portable ladder safety regulations;
  - b. operator must wear non-slip footwear;
  - c. get a co-worker to help you raise ladders that are long and/or heavy;
  - d. when raising extension ladders, always raise it to position before extending the sections; and always lower the sections before lowering the ladder;
  - e. always stand the ladder on a firm level surface, never place a ladder on an unstable base for more height;
  - f. a portable ladder other than a step ladder should be placed against the structure so that the slope of the ladder is one horizontal to four vertical;  
example: a 12’ ladder should lean 3’.
  - g. if possible do not set up a ladder in a passageway. If you must set up a ladder in a passageway, barricade the area using yellow “Caution” ribbon.
  - h. use extreme caution so ladders will not come into contact with electrical circuits, use a wooden or fiber glass ladder for electrical work or where electrical contact could occur;
  - i. use lockouts and barricades when working on or near overhead doors, overhead hoists, etc.;

- j. always use both hands for climbing, carry tools and materials in pouches or hoist them up with a rope;
- k. do not extend any part of your body except for your arms beyond the side rails of the ladder other than a step ladder and you must maintain a three point stance at all times:
- l. do not work from either of the top two rungs or steps unless the ladder is a step ladder that has been equipped with a suitable handrail:
- m. make sure stepladders are fully opened and that the metal braces or an equivalent rigid support are locked in position;
- n. always secure a portable ladder, other than a step ladder, using one of the following methods: tie to a secure immovable object at a height of about 5' or more; or, have someone hold the ladder; or, if the ladder is equipped with hooks, hooked over an immovable object; or, position the ladder between two immovable objects which will prevent side movement.
- o. be careful so that ropes, wires, cords, hoses etc. do not get tangled in the feet or side rails of the ladder;
- p. clean any oil, grease, etc. from ladder after each use;
- q. always return ladder to its storage area and secure in place if required, after use.