

Ladder Safety Tips

The following ladder safety tips will help you greatly reduce the chance of you becoming one of these statistics. It is better to take the time to be safe than to rush and end up incapacitated for the rest of your life.

1. Always take proper precautions when choosing a ladder based on the type of work being done, the weight the ladder must carry, and the condition of the ladder. Make sure that the weight rating will support the weight of the worker plus materials.
2. Keep in mind that the length of ladder is different from its usable length. Make sure that the ladder is long enough for the job. Never stand on the top or top step of a step ladder or the top three rungs of a straight or extension ladder.
3. Examine the ladder for any defects or features that can be potentially dangerous.
 - Metal Ladders - check for any sharp edges, dents, bent steps, rungs or rails. Ladder should have slip-resistant rubber or plastic feet, and slip resistant steps.
 - Wooden Ladders - check for splits, cracks, chips and all but small, tight knots. Steps should be reinforced with metal rods or angle braces. Only use wooden or fiberglass ladders around electricity.
 - All ladders - Check for loose rungs or steps.
4. Always follow these precautions when using a ladder:
 - Do not hand-carry loads on a ladder.
 - When climbing, keep your hips between the side rails and do not lean too far or overreach. Reposition the ladder closer to the work instead.
 - Position base of ladder 1 foot away for every 4 feet it reaches up.
 - Ladders used to reach a platform or roof must extend at least 3 feet beyond.
 - Extension ladders need both locks holding to prevent overloading one of the rails.
 - Never use a step ladder or folding ladder unless it is securely spread open.
 - Never use a ladder in a strong wind.
 - Always make sure the top of the ladder rests on a firm, flat surface.
 - Ladders should not be placed in front of a door that is not locked, blocked or guarded.
5. Protect your ladders by storing them where they are protected from the weather and other damage.

Ladder safety should not be an afterthought. Remember, the key to preventing accidents is to take the proper precautions. Always read and following all instructions accompanying ladders, properly set up the ladders, and use good sense while working on ladders.