



# Ladder Safety

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## **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this section is to provide guidelines for the safe use of ladders. This policy will follow 29 CFR 1926.1036 "Ladders."

## **II. PROCEDURES**

### **A. General**

1. Ladders shall be inspected by the user before each use as well as annually; those with defects shall be removed from service. The use of broken ladders is prohibited.
2. Wood parts shall be smoothly machined and dressed on all sides so as to be free from sharp edges and splinters.
3. Ladder rails shall extend at least 36 inches above landings. Do not tie ladders together to lengthen them or use a ladder as horizontal scaffold section. Do not overload a ladder.
4. Choose the right ladder for the job—the right type and height. The ladder should preclude your climbing above the third rung from the top of an extension straight ladder and from climbing above the second tread from the top of a stepladder.
5. Always face the ladder and hold on with both hands when going up or down. While working, keep your hips between the rails, stay in close to the rungs, and limit your reach to a comfortable arm's length.
6. Do not carry tools or materials by hand while climbing up or down. Place needed items on the shelf (not top) of a step ladder before you ascend or raise and lower your tools and materials in a container by means of a hand line, or transport them in a protectively rugged and covered pouch supported by a belt or otherwise suspended so as to leave your hands free.
7. Do not paint ladders.

### **B. Portable Ladders**

1. Place ladder base section so as to provide a secure footing. Safety shoes should be installed on all extension ladders.
2. Place the ladder the proper distance away from its support. A simple rule for setting up a ladder at the proper angle is to place the base a distance from the vertical support equal to 1/4 of the working length.
3. Do not use a metal ladder for work near electrical equipment.

4. Protect the footing of the ladder from disturbance. Barricade the base against traffic, lock or block adjacent doors, station an assistant to ward off contact, etc.

### C. Landing Platforms and Fixed Ladders

1. When ladders are used to ascend to heights exceeding 20 feet, landing platforms shall be provided for each 20 feet of height.
2. Landing platforms shall be equipped with standard railings and toe boards arranged so as to give safe access to the ladder. Platforms shall not be less than 24 inches in width and 30 inches in length.
3. The step across distance from the nearest edge of the ladder to the nearest edge of equipment or structure shall not be more than 12 inches, and not less than 2 1/2 inches.
4. The distance from the center line of rungs, cleats, or steps to the nearest permanent object in back of the ladder shall not be less than 7 inches, except when unavoidable obstructions are encountered.
5. Guards shall be provided on ladders of more than 20 feet to a maximum unbroken length of 30 feet. (Construction and installation specifications for cage or basket guard and ladder wells vary because of the nature of access and its location.)
6. Ladder safety devices may be used in lieu of cage protection on tower and water tanks and chimney ladders over 20 feet in unbroken length. No landing platform shall be required in these cases. All ladder safety devices such as those that incorporate life belts, friction brakes, and sliding attachments shall meet the design requirements of the ladders which they serve.