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Ladder Safety

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With Christmas right around the corner it is time to remember about ladder safety at home as well as at work. Don't let Christmas be ruined by someone getting hurt from falling off a ladder.

Here are some thoughts about ladder safety that apply to home and work. Remember that ladders are tools. Many of the basic safety rules that apply to tools also apply to the safe use of a ladder.

- If a person feels tired or dizzy, or is prone to losing his/her balance, stay off the ladder.
- Do not use ladders in high winds or storms.
- Wear clean slip-resistant shoes. Shoes with leather soles are not appropriate for ladder use since they are not considered sufficiently slip resistant.
- Before using a ladder inspect it to confirm it is in good working condition.
- Ladders with loose or missing parts must be rejected and not used. Rickety ladders that sway or lean to the side must be rejected and not used.
- Select the ladder that is the right size for the job.
- The duty rating of the ladder must be greater than the total weight of the climber, tools, supplies, and other objects placed upon the ladder. The length of the ladder must be sufficient so the climber does not have to stand on the top two rungs or steps.
- When the ladder is set-up for use it must be placed on firm, level ground and without any type of slippery condition present at either the base or top support points.
- Only one person at a time is permitted on a ladder.
- Ladders must not be placed in front of closed doors that open toward the ladder. The door must be blocked open, locked, or guarded.
- Read the safety information labels on the ladder.
- The on-product safety information is specific to the particular type of ladder on which it appears. The climber is not considered qualified or adequately trained to use the ladder until familiar with this information.



Always keep Three Points-of-Contact

Factors contributing to falls from ladders include haste, sudden movement, lack of attention, the condition of the ladder (worn or damaged), the user's age or physical condition (or both), and the user's footwear.

Although the user's weight or size typically does not increase the likelihood of a fall, improper climbing posture creates user clumsiness and may cause falls. To reduce the chances of falling while climbing the ladder:

- Wear slip-resistant shoes with heavy soles to prevent foot fatigue.
- Clean the soles of shoes to maximize traction.
- Use toelines, a tool belt, or an assistant to convey materials so the climber is hands free when climbing.
- Climb slowly and deliberately to avoid sudden movements.
- Never attempt to move a ladder while standing on it.
- Keep the center of your belt buckle (stomach) between the ladder side rails when climbing and while working. Do not overreach or lean while working so that you don't fall off the ladder.

When climbing a ladder, it is safest to utilize three points-of-contact because it minimizes the chances of slipping and falling from the ladder. At all times during ascent, descent, and working, the climber must face the ladder and have two hands and one or two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder steps, rungs, and/or side rails. In this way, the climber is not likely to become unstable in the

event one limb slips during the climb. It is important to note that the climber must not carry any objects in either hand that can interfere with a firm grip on the ladder. Otherwise, three points-of-contact with the ladder cannot be adequately maintained and the chance of falling is increased in the event a hand or foot slip occurs.

To quickly recap, here are a few things that need to be done when using a ladder.

- Choose the right ladder for the job.
- Inspect the ladder before use.
- Set the ladder up as level as possible.
- Climb and work inside the rails.
- Use three points of contact.