

GJ Gentry
SAFETY MEETING MINUTES

CONDUCTED BY:

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TRAINING TOPIC(S): Ladder Safety Training

When used correctly, ladders can be an effective means to accomplish work at elevated levels. However, they are also dangerous.

More falls occur from ladders than any other piece of equipment. There are approximately 90,000 ladder related injuries that result in a visit to the emergency room.

Regardless of the working height, we must use ladders correctly, and only after being trained and authorized to do so.

Please note: This training cannot possibly cover every ladder safety rule or manufacturer requirement. Please ensure you read and fully understand the manufacturer's instructions of the ladder you are using.

Choosing the right ladder

There are many different types. While the principles we discuss apply to all ladders, we will focus our attention on extension ladders and step ladders.

- When choosing a ladder ask yourself:
- What will I be using it for?
 - Where will I be working?
 - How much weight will be on the ladder?

We would not use a step ladder to access a platform such as a roof. A step ladder is not designed for that. Instead it is meant to be worked off of.

An extension ladder can be worked off, if it can be used safely and within the parameters of OSHA regulations and the manufacturer's guidelines.

Think about where you will be using the ladder. This is important because ladders are made of different materials and you want to choose the right one.

The three primary types are Aluminum or Metal, Fiberglass, and wood. Consider this scenario:

You are going to be working in proximity to an overhead electrical line or some other energized component. What ladder would you choose?

You wouldn't choose an aluminum or metal ladder because they are conductive. Also use caution with wood ladders, as wood can absorb moisture and become conductive too.

So, while there are scenarios where it is safe to use these ladders, most find fiberglass ladders to be the best choice.

How much weight will be on the ladder?

Type	Weight Rating	Duty Rating
1-AA	375 pounds	Super Heavy Duty
1-A	300 pounds	Extra Heavy Duty
1	250 pounds	Heavy Duty Industrial
2	225 pounds	Medium Duty Commercial
3	200 pounds	Light Duty Household

Look for the ladder's label to know what its weight limitation is.

Other important factors include choosing ladders that are in good condition and will allow you to safely reach where you need to work.

Inspecting ladders

It is important to inspect the ladder daily prior to use. Then, as you use it periodically throughout the day, ensure it is still safe to use. Items to inspect on a step ladder include:

- Looking the ladder over to ensure it is stable, and not wobbling. It should have an ANSI rating label and be free of rust or slippery substances.
- Inspect the steps: Make sure they are not loose, cracked, bent, or missing.
- Ensure the feet of the ladder are intact
- The side rails cannot be cracked, split, bent or frayed.
- Also look at the spreader. This cannot be loose, cracked, or missing. This is important, as the ladder will not be stable if this is not in good condition.
- The top of the ladder should also be intact with nothing cracked, loose or missing.

- And the ladder should not be painted with opaque coatings. Keep the ladder clean!

What about extension ladders?

In addition to the items we just discussed: the overall condition, having the ANSI rating label, the feet, rails and rungs all being in good condition, you will also want to inspect any additional hardware such as the rung locks and the rope and pulley system. Ensure they are in good condition and not loose, bent, or cracked.

If a ladder is defective, immediately tag it “Do Not Use”, remove it from service, and notify your supervisor.

Using ladders safely

For any ladder:

- First, think through your work. Do not set up near a doorway, aisle way, or another location where someone could run into you. What should you do if you have to set up in these locations?
- Always set up the ladder on level ground and, if outside, at least 10’ away from power lines. The distance is more if the lines are more than 50 thousand volts.
- Always face the ladder when climbing it and maintain three points of contact. This means your hands must be free for climbing.
- Therefore, carry tools and materials safely in a work belt or have them safely sent up to you.
- Never stand on the top two steps of a ladder. This may be tempting. But you cannot do this. If you need to get higher than what you can safely do on a ladder, you will need a taller ladder, or another elevated platform such as a scaffold or scissor lift.
- Never straddle a ladder or try to “walk” the ladder, that is moving it while you are on it.
- Keep your torso within the side rails of the ladder. Overextending can cause the ladder to tip over.
- If you are using a step ladder, you will also want to make sure that the ladder is fully extended and not folded.

- If using an extension ladder, set the ladder up at a 4:1 pitch. This means if the ladder is extending 20' up, you will want the bottom of the ladder to be 5' away from the structure.
- The ladder must extend at least 3' above the platform being accessed. In addition, the ladder must be secure to prevent it from slipping and falling.
- A word of caution: Many injuries have occurred when the feet of an extension ladder have slipped. The base must be secure!