

MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Portable Ladder Safety



Ladders, like tools, can be your best friend or worst enemy. The correct one for the job is very important. They are simple and easy to use, but there is still a certain amount of planning and care involved with their use. Each year in the U.S. there are 300 deaths and 130,000 injuries that require medical attention.

Ladder Hazards -

Most ladder accidents are caused by improper ladder selection, care or use, but not by manufacturing defects. Some of the more common hazards are instability, electrical shock, and falls, all of which can be predicted and prevented. Prevention starts with proper planning, selecting the correct ladder, good work procedures, and good ladder maintenance.

Prevention Tips -

- Do not hand carry loads on a ladder.
- Do not try reaching so far that you lose your balance; move the ladder.
- Non-skid feet will help to prevent a ladder from slipping on a hard, smooth surface.
- Do not stand on the ladder's top three rungs.
- A damaged rail on one side of a ladder may cause it to give way.
- The '1 to 4' formula should be used when positioning the ladder; one foot out for every four feet up. A 12' ladder should be 3' out at the base.
- Ladders used to reach walking surfaces or roofs should extend past the surface at least three feet.
- Extension ladders need both locks holding to prevent overloading a rail.
- Stepladders should be securely spread open (double check to see that the spreaders are locked).
- Electric shock can happen with metal or wet wooden ladders. The shock itself is dangerous, but it can cause one to fall, resulting in a possible injury.
- When working around poles or columns, the top rung can be replaced with a rope or chain to secure the ladder, or a rope or chain using the top rung will normally suffice.
- Aluminum ladders are very corrosion resistant but exposed to fertilizer can cause them damage.

Ladder Selection -

Portable ladders are designed to be one-man equipment with the proper strength to support the worker as well as his tools and materials. Ladders are manufactured in three classes:

Type I – Industrial – Heavy-duty with a load capacity not more than 250 lbs.

Type II – Commercial – Medium-duty with a load capacity of not more than 225 lbs.

Type III – Household – Light-duty with a load capacity of 200 lbs.

Ladder Maintenance -

- Wood ladders – Protect with varnish, shellac, linseed oil or sealer. Paint isn't recommended as it will cover cracks, etc. Always check for cracks, rot, splinters, broken rungs, loose joints, etc.
- Metal ladders – Before each use check for burrs or sharp edges. Look for loose joints and bolts, defective welds and cracks. Make sure the hooks and locks on extension ladders are in good condition. Replace the worn or frayed ropes on extension ladders when they need it.
- Fiberglass ladders – These ladders should have a surface coat of lacquer on them at all times. If it is scratched or scraped off, sand the affected area and add new lacquer.

Sample Checklist for Ladder Inspection -

- Loose steps or rungs (loose is movement with hands)
- Loose nails, screws or other moving parts
- Cracked, split or broken rungs, steps or braces
- Damaged or worn non-slip bases

Stepladders:

- Loose or bent hinge spreaders
- Broken hinge spreaders
- Broken steps or hinges

Extension Ladders:

- Loose, broken or missing parts
- Defective locks, preventing them to seat properly
- Worn or rotten rope

~ SAFETY'S INTENTION IS -
ACCIDENT PREVENTION ~



~ ALERT TODAY -
ALIVE TOMORROW ~