



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Portable Ladder Safety



According to recent accident statistics, the working men and women of America abuse and misuse ladders in the workplace as a rule rather than an exception. Ladder accidents can be avoided because a ladder is one of the simplest, most easy-to-use tools in any industry. Most ladder accidents are the result of careless or improper usage. These facts alone are reasonable justification enough to have a formal ladder training program:

### Ladder safety rules-

To use ladders safely and effectively, one must:

- o Know the rules of ladder safety.
- o Observe these rules at all times.

Practically all falls from ladders can be traced to using them in an unsafe manner. In most cases, the person who falls is usually the one to get hurt. So, the fallen person must observe the proper rules because they are the ones who will get hurt, if they don't observe the rules. Others in the area might get hurt as well.

### Technical Information-

Ladder safety begins with the two rules discussed above, but also includes the following:

- Selection of the proper ladder for the job.
- Periodic inspection, setup, proper climbing and standing.
- Proper use, care and storage.
- Remember that there are specific rules for step ladders, single ladders and extension ladders.

These rules are a combination of OSHA regulations and proven commonsense procedures.

### **GENERAL SAFETY RULES FOR ALL LADDERS-**

- o **Ladder Selection-** There are four types of ladders for accepted use, Type I & IA are recommended for heavy-duty use while the Type II & III are designed for medium and light duty use. The rungs on all approved ladders should have grooved or roughened surfaces to prevent slipping.
- o **Ladder Inspection-**
  - ~ Check all ladders before each use. Check wooden ladders for cracks or splits and check rungs that they are safe and secure and the hardware that it is securely fastened.
  - ~ Inspect metal and fiberglass ladders for bends and breaks.
  - ~ Never use a defective ladder. Tag it "defective" and report it.
- o **Ladder Setup-**
  - ~ Make sure the ladder feet are on solid ground and both feet sit firmly and level.
  - ~ Do not attempt to extend the ladder by setting it on top of boxes or blocks for extra height.

- ~ Ladders should never be leaning sideways; they should always be straight.
- ~ Brace the feet of the ladder with a material that is solid and will help prevent it from slipping.
- ~Never set up a ladder in high winds, especially light-weight metal or fiberglass ones.
- ~Never set up a ladder in front of a door unless the door is blocked or a guard is posted.
- ~ Refrain from using a ladder in snow or ice unless it is absolutely necessary. If you have to use a ladder in those conditions, get spurs or spike type shoes for the ladder feet.
- ~Use safety shoes for ladder feet, when there is any chance of slipping.
- o **Ladder Climbing & Standing-**
  - ~ Keep the rungs of the ladders clean and free of any kind of material that would render them unsafe.
  - ~Always face the ladder when climbing up or down, use both hands and maintain a secure grip.
  - ~Never carry a heavy load when climbing a ladder. Pull the load up to your position with a rope.
  - ~Climb up or down a ladder with your feet positioned in the middle of the rungs.
  - ~Do not overreach from a ladder or lean to one side or the other. This is the most common cause of ladder falls. Work as comfortably as you can and then change positions.
  - ~Never slide down a ladder.
- o **Proper Use of Ladders-**
  - ~ Never use metal ladders around exposed electrical wiring.
  - ~ When using a ladder where there is traffic, erect warning signs or barricades to steer traffic away from the area or station a person holding the ladder for safety.
  - ~ Do not try to move a ladder by jumping or rocking it. Get down on the ground and reposition it.
  - ~As in any case around work, avoid use of a ladder where alcohol, prescription drugs or bad health may be involved.
  - ~ Do not leave tools or materials on top of ladders. If you do, they could fall on you, and you could be hurt. If they fall on someone else, they could be hurt and they might sue you or your company.
  - ~Allow only one person at a time on the ladder, unless it is designed for two.
  - ~ Never use a ladder on a scaffold platform. If you need to be higher, raise the scaffold.
  - ~Never use a ladder as a horizontal platform, plank, scaffold or material hoist.
- o **Safety Rules for Step Ladders-**
  - ~Never use a stepladder over 20 feet long.
  - ~Always open a stepladder completely and make sure that the spreaders are locked open before use.
  - ~Do not stand higher than the 2<sup>nd</sup> step of the ladder and never step on the top or cap.