

MAFES DAWG TRACKS

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Safety Tips:
Portable Ladder Safety

In a recent study, Ms. Christina Socias, a research analyst with the Safety Daily Advisor, found that work-related ladder falls in a given year caused 113 deaths and about 15,500 injuries that resulted in at least one day of lost work and approximately 34,000 injuries treated in hospital emergency departments. She also revealed in her study that most ladder injuries can be prevented by employee training.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT LADDER-

There are three basic ladder types:

- ✓ Type I – Industrial, heavy-duty, with a load capacity of not more than 250 lbs.
- ✓ Type II – Commercial, medium-duty, with a load capacity of not more than 225 lbs. (suited for painting and similar tasks)
- ✓ Type III – Household, light-duty, with a load capacity of 200 lbs.

You should only choose or purchase a ladder that has the Underwriters' Laboratory seal. Ladders usually come in three different types of materials: aluminum, wood and fiberglass. Aluminum is the most durable, but conducts electricity. Wood, obviously, will rot. Fiberglass is the best combination of durability and non-conductivity but also is the most expensive.

Following are some proper ladder uses that, if they are heeded and practiced, will help to reduce the potential for ladder related injuries:

- Read and follow all the label markings on the ladder.
- Avoid electrical hazards- look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder. Avoid using an electrical ladder near power lines or energized electrical equipment.
- Do not use a self-supporting ladder (step ladder) as a single ladder or in a partially closed position.
- Do not use the top rung (step) as a rung (step) unless it was designed for that purpose.
- Always maintain a 3-point (two hands & a foot, two feet & a hand) contact on the ladder when climbing. Keep your body in the middle of the ladder and always face the ladder when climbing.
- Only use ladders and appropriate accessories, ladder levelers, jacks, or hooks for their designed purpose.
- Ladders must be free of any slippery material on the ladder rungs, steps, or feet.
- Use a ladder only on a stable and level surface, unless it has been secured (top or bottom) to prevent displacement.
- Do not place a ladder on boxes, barrels, or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.

- Do not move or shift a ladder while a person or equipment is on the ladder.
- An extension or straight ladder used to access an elevated surface must extend at least three feet above the point of support. Do not stand on the three top rungs of a straight, single, or extension ladder.
- The proper angle for setting up a ladder is to place its base a quarter of the working length of the ladder from the wall or other vertical surface.
- A ladder placed in any location where it can be displaced by other work activities must be secured to prevent displacement or a barricade must be erected to keep traffic away from the ladder.
- Be sure that all locks on the ladder are properly engaged.
- Do not exceed the maximum load rating of the ladder. Be aware of the ladder's load rating and of the weight it is supporting, including the weight of the tools or equipment.

LADDER MAINTENANCE-

Regardless of the type of ladder you have, a regular inspection before each use should be part of the protocol.

Wood ladders-

- Protect with varnish, shellac, linseed oil, or sealer. Paint isn't recommended as it will cover cracks, etc.
- Always check for cracks, splinters, broken rungs, and loose joints.

Metal ladders-

- Before each use, check for burrs or sharp edges.
- Look for loose joints and bolts, defective welds, and cracks.
- Make sure the locks and hooks on extension ladders are in good condition.
- Replace the ropes on extension ladders when they become frayed or worn.

Fiberglass ladders-

- This type of ladder should have a coat of lacquer on them at all times. If it is scratched or scratched off, replace that area with new lacquer.

SAMPLE CHECKLIST FOR LADDER INSPECTION-

- ~Loose steps or rungs (loose movement with your hands)
- ~Loose screws, nails, or other moving parts.
- ~Cracked, broken, or split rungs or steps.
- ~Damaged or worn non-slip surfaces.

Stepladders-

- ~Loose, bent, or broken hinge spreaders
- ~Broken steps or hinges

Extension Ladders-

- Loose, broken, or missing parts
- Defective locks, preventing them to seat properly.

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**WHILE YOU'RE ON A
LADDER --
DON'T STEP BACK TO
ADMIRE YOUR WORK!**