

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Ladders

So you walk around looking for the ladder ... is that what you really need? While an extension ladder or stepladder is commonly used to reach heights, it may not always be the best option. Ask yourself these questions before deciding on a ladder:

1. Will I have to hold heavy items while on the ladder?
2. Is the elevated area high enough that it would require a long ladder that can be unstable?
3. Will I be working from this height for a long time?
4. Do I have to stand on the ladder sideways in order to do this work?

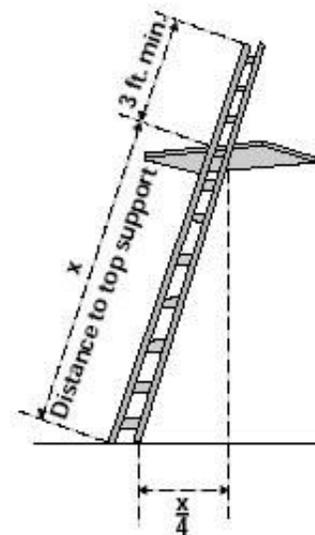
If your answer is yes to one of the above questions, consider using something other than a ladder.

A few safety reminders when a ladder can help get the job done:

- Before using a ladder, check it carefully to ensure there are no visible defects and that it is in good working condition. Do not use a ladder with bent legs, missing steps, or any visible cracks or other defects.
- Use the right ladder for the job. For example, ensure the ladder is high enough for you to reach your work area without having to stand on the top rung.
- Do not exceed the maximum load rating of a ladder. Be aware of the ladder's load rating and of the weight it is supporting, including the weight of any tools or equipment.
- When using ladders to access another level, secure and extend the ladder at least 3 feet above the landing point to provide a safe handhold.
- The base of the ladder should be secured.

- Wear proper footwear (e.g., non-slip flat shoes; not flip flops or something your foot may easily slip out of). Keep the rungs/steps clean, so they are not slippery.
- Place the ladder on stable and level ground. DO NOT place it on an uneven surface.
- Prevent passersby from walking under or near ladders in use by placing barriers (e.g., cones) or getting your coworker to act as a lookout.
- Ensure that the ladder is fully extended or folding hinges in open, locked position before starting work.
- Do not move or shift a ladder while a person or equipment is on the ladder.
- Do not carry any tools or materials in your hands when climbing a ladder. Maintain three points of contact with the ladder at all times (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand).
- Do not lean away from the ladder to carry out your task. Always keep your weight centered between the side rails.

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.



For more info contact – Leslie Woolington
MAFES /MSU-EXTENSION
Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control
(662) 325-3204

Sources:
<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3625.pdf>
https://www.osha.gov/Publications/portable_ladder_qc.html