

# Reducing Falls in Construction: Safe Use of Stepladders

Workers who use ladders in construction risk permanent injury or death (n)2 C TJ ET EMC /P <</Lang (en-US)/MCID 1

- Grease, dirt or other contaminants that could cause slips or falls.
- Paint or stickers (except warning or safety labels) that could hide possible defects.
- Use a ladder that can sustain at least four times the maximum intended load, except that each extra-heavy duty type 1A metal or plastic ladder shall sustain at least 3.3 times the maximum intended load. Also acceptable are ladders that meet the requirements set forth in Appendix A of Subpart X. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and labels on the ladder. To determine the correct ladder, consider your weight plus the weight

## Ahead to Get the Job Done Safely.

A competent person must visually inspect stepladders for visible defects on a periodic basis and after any occurrence that could affect their safe use. Defects include, but are not limited to:

- Structural damage, split/bent side rails, broken or missing rungs/steps/cleats and missing or damaged safety devices.

Employers must train each worker to recognize and minimize ladder-related hazards.



- Damaged stepladder
- Ladders on slippery or unstable surface
- Unlocked ladder spreaders
- Standing on the top step or top cap
- Loading ladder beyond rated load
- Ladders in high-traffic location
- Reaching outside ladder side rails
- Ladders in close proximity to electrical wiring/equipment

Read and follow all the manufacturer's instructions and labels on the ladder.

- Look for overhead power lines before handling or climbing a ladder.
- Maintain a 3-point contact (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand) when climbing/descending a ladder.
- Stay near the middle of the ladder and face the ladder while climbing up/down.
- Use a barricade to keep traffic away from the ladder.

- Keep ladders free of any slippery materials.
- Only put ladders on a stable and level surface that is not slippery.

- Use ladders for a purpose other than that for which they were designed. For example, do not use a folded stepladder as a single ladder.
- Use a stepladder with spreaders unlocked.
- Use the top step or cap as a step.
- Place a ladder on boxes, barrels or other unstable bases.
- Move or shift a ladder with a person or equipment on the ladder.
- Use cross bracing on the rear of stepladders for climbing.
- Paint a ladder with opaque coatings.
- Use a damaged ladder.
- Leave tools/materials/equipment on stepladder.
- Use a stepladder horizontally like a platform.
- Use a metal stepladder near power lines or electrical equipment.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to help ensure these conditions for America's workers by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education, and assistance. For more information, visit [www.osha-slc.gov](http://www.osha-slc.gov) or call OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), TTY 1-877-889-5627.

### Additional Resources

OSHA standard: 29 CFR 1926 Subpart X—Stairways and Ladders

American National Standards Institute standard: ANSI A14.1, A14.2, A14.5—Ladder Safety Requirements (*Not an OSHA standard, included to be used as guidance to meet OSHA's requirements*)

Employers using stepladders must follow the ladder requirements set forth in 29 CFR 1926 Subpart X. Per Appendix A to Subpart X of Part 1926—Ladders, ladders designed in accordance with the following ANSI standards will be considered in accordance

with 29 CFR 1926.1053(a)(1): ANSI A14.1-1982—American National Standard for Ladders—Portable Wood—Safety Requirements, ANSI A14.2-1982—American National Standard for Ladders—Portable Metal—Safety Requirements, and ANSI A14.5-1982—American National Standard for Ladders—Portable Reinforced Plastic—Safety Requirements.

**State plan guidance:** States with OSHA-approved state plans may have additional requirements for avoiding falls from ladders. For more information on these requirements, please visit: [www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/statesstandards.html](http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/statesstandards.html)

Most OSHA offices have compliance assistance specialists to help employers and workers comply with OSHA standards. For details call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) or visit: [www.osha.gov/contactus/bystate](http://www.osha.gov/contactus/bystate)

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.