

Ladder Safety

Use ladders last! Ladders are dangerous tools that should be used as a last resort. Even a short fall from a step ladder can result in serious back, leg and head injuries. It can even be fatal. Always use a safer alternative to ladders when possible. Review the following ladder safety tips with your employees.



Toolbox Tips

- Think twice before using a ladder. Consider safer alternatives such as a lift, scaffolding or rolling stairs.
- Choose the correct ladder for the job. Use of improper ladders or step stools could lead to serious injury.
- Never use chairs, buckets, crates or other objects in lieu of the proper ladder.
- Never use a metal ladder, or wooden ladder with metal reinforcements, around electrical wires.
- Follow safety labels, warnings and instructions displayed on the ladder.
- Inspect the ladder for damage before use.
- Check ladder and shoes for oil, mud or other slippery material.
- Avoid setting up ladders in doorways or heavy traffic areas.
- Place ladder on a firm, solid and dry surface.
- Set up step ladders with both spreader bars fully extended and locked.
- Extend extension ladders at least three feet above the support edge. Set the ladder out one foot for every four feet of ladder height to the support edge.
- Tie off or secure extension ladders to prevent them from tipping over.

Use ladders only as a last resort.

- Avoid over-reaching. Keep your belt buckle inside the rails of the ladder.
- Maintain three points of contact when going up or down ladders. Use rope or another device to raise or lower supplies.
- Do not stand on the top two steps of a ladder.
- Get help when attempting to do a difficult task atop a ladder. Offer to assist coworkers when they are working at heights.

These advisory materials have been developed from national standards and sources believed to be reliable, however, no guarantee is made as to the sufficiency of the information contained in the material and MEM assumes no liability for its use. Advice about specific situations should be obtained from a safety professional.