Ladder Safety Meeting Kit



Ladder Use General Safety Talk

Ladders are an essential tool on many job sites and at home across the United States. Because of their wide spread use and the inherent danger of working at heights, they are responsible for a significant number of injuries both on and off the job. Understanding the hazards of using a ladder, following the necessary safe work practices, and avoiding complacency can be a life saver.

4 Main Types of Ladder Accidents: Ladder accidents are extremely common even though they are entirely preventable. Ladder accidents can come from a wide variety of issues but the **following four causes** account for the vast majority. If these simple loss prevention tips for each cause are followed, ladder accidents could almost be eliminated.

1. **Selecting the Wrong Type of Ladder:** Like most other jobs, choosing the right tool can make all the difference when it comes to safety and this is the same for ladders. One thing to consider when selecting an appropriate ladder is the ladder's weight capacity. Each ladder is designed to support a maximum weight limit and if the climber exceeds that limit the ladder could break and cause the user to fall or become injured.
2. **Using Worn or Damaged Ladders:** Another common contributing factor to ladder accidents is the use of old, worn, or damaged ladders. Like everything else, ladders have a shelf life; after a couple of years the stress of being climbed up and down on causes ladders to break down. Damaged ladders are extremely dangerous as they can easily break while being used and cause serious injuries.
3. **Incorrect Use of Ladders:** Human error is by far the leading cause of ladder accidents. Never use a ladder in any other way than what the manufacturer intended it to be used for. Also, do not lengthen or alter a ladder in any way.

While using a ladder always maintain 3 points of contact with the ladder to ensure stability. Also, never attempt to reach for something while on the ladder. It is much safer to get off the ladder, move it, and then climb back up.

4. **Incorrect Placement of Ladders:** A good practice to ensure a ladder is secure is to always have a helper support the base while a ladder is being used. If the ladder can not be held by someone else, make sure it has an

appropriate foot to prevent it from slipping. The feet of the ladder can be staked if you are using a ladder outside and no one is available to support the feet of the ladder.

BEST LADDER WORK PRACTICES

- Read and follow all labels/markings on the ladder.
- Avoid electrical hazards. Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder. Avoid using a metal ladder near power lines or exposed energized electrical equipment.
- Always inspect the ladder prior to using it. If the ladder is damaged, remove it from service and tag it until repaired or discarded.
- Always maintain a three-point (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand) contact on the ladder when climbing. Keep your body near the middle of the step, and always face the ladder while climbing.
- Only use ladders and appropriate accessories (ladder levelers, jacks or hooks) for their designed purposes.
- Ladders must be free of any slippery material on the rungs, steps, or feet.
- Do not use a self-supporting ladder (e.g., step ladder) as a single ladder or in a partially closed position.
- Do not use the top step/rung of a ladder as a step/rung unless it was designed for that purpose.
- 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 erect a barricade to keep traffic away from the ladder.
- Be sure that all locks on an extension ladder are properly engaged.
- 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.
- Only use ladders for their designed purpose.
- Make sure you’re using the right type of ladder for the job.
- Make sure that your shoes are clean of any substances which could cause you to slip.
- Protect your ladder at the base to prevent people or objects bumping into it.
- Do not carry objects that could cause loss of balance.
- Avoid using the ladder if you feel dizzy or tired or are impaired.
- If using a ladder outside, do not use in windy or inclement weather.
- Make certain the ladder is free of grease, oil, mud and other sticky or slippery materials.
- Wear slip-resistant shoes with clean soles for maximum traction.
- Face the ladder and always grip the rungs, not the side rails.
- Extension ladders should extend 3 feet above the roof or platform you’re

trying to reach.
- Do not stand higher than the step indicated on the label marking the highest standing level.
- Don’t lean or overreach; reposition the ladder instead.
- Do not move the ladder while in use.
- Take your time when climbing down so you don’t skip any steps.

FINAL WORD

Ladders are used at home and the workplace. People who use them at home often do not use ladders in the workplace; rules at home are often more relaxed than in the workplace. Using a ladder improperly causes many accidents resulting in injuries and even death.