

Ladder safety rules and requirements

Working on and around ladders may be hazardous. Ladders are a leading source of injuries among workers, requiring time off the job or possibly resulting in death.

Rules for ladder use:

- Keep ladders free of oil, grease and other slipping hazards.
- Do not load ladders beyond their maximum intended load nor beyond their manufacturer's rated capacity.
- Use ladders only for their designed purpose.
- Use ladders only on stable, level surfaces unless secured to prevent accidental movement.
- Do not use ladders on slippery surfaces unless secured or equipped with slip-resistant feet to prevent accidental movement. Do not use slip-resistant feet as a substitute for exercising care when placing, lashing or holding a ladder on slippery surfaces.
- Secure ladders that are placed in areas such as passageways, doorways, driveways or where they can be displaced by workplace activities or traffic to prevent accidental movement. If possible, use a barricade to keep traffic or activity away from the ladder.
- Keep areas clear around the top and bottom of ladders.
- Do not move, shift or extend ladders while in use.
- Use ladders equipped with nonconductive side rails if the worker or ladder could come in contact with exposed, energized electrical equipment.
- Face the ladder when moving up or down.
- Use at least one hand to grasp the ladder when climbing.
- Do not carry objects or loads that could cause loss of balance or falling.

General requirements for ladders:

- Double-cleated ladders, or two or more ladders, must be provided when ladders are the only way to enter or exit a work area where 25 or more employees work or when a ladder serves simultaneous two-way traffic.

- Ladder rungs, cleats and steps must be parallel, level and uniformly spaced when the ladder is in position for use.
- Rungs, cleats and steps of portable and fixed ladders (except as provided below) must be spaced 10 to 14 inches apart, along the ladder's side rails.
- Rungs, cleats and steps of stepstools must be spaced 8 to 12 inches apart, between center lines of the rungs, cleats and steps.
- Rungs, cleats and steps at the base section of extension trestle ladders must be spaced 8 to 18 inches apart, between center lines of the rungs, cleats and steps. The rung spacing on the extension section must be spaced 6 to 12 inches apart.
- Ladders must not be tied or fastened together to create longer sections unless they are specifically designed for such use.
- When splicing side rails, the resulting side rail must be equivalent in strength to a one-piece side rail made of the same material.
- Two or more separate ladders used to reach an elevated work area must be offset with a platform or landing between the ladders, except when portable ladders are used to gain access to fixed ladders.
- Ladder components must be surfaced to prevent snagging of clothing and injury from punctures or lacerations.
- Wooden ladders must not be coated with any opaque covering except for identification or warning labels, which may be placed only on one face of a side rail.

Note: A competent person must inspect ladders for visible defects periodically and after any incident that could affect their safe use.

Source: OSHA Publication 3124-12R (2003)



DON'T RISK IT!

Don't Risk It! is a quarterly newsletter produced for Motorists' commercial lines policyholders by The Motorists Insurance Group's Risk Management Department. Please contact your independent Motorists agent or visit www.motoristsgroup.com for more information about the risk management services available for commercial lines policyholders.

News

MI The Motorists Insurance Group, You know us.®