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Be At the Height of Safety

Whether it is a simple step stool, or one which soars to many feet above the ground, ladders help you reach heights you never thought you could. There is far more to safe ladder use than having a sturdy ladder and lots of physical agility. Many people are seriously injured by falling from ladders, whether from close to the ground or higher up.

By following some simple safety procedures, you can ensure that you successfully climb a ladder to your destination...without experiencing a fatal 'downer'!

◆ Choose the right ladder for the job. They range from very short step ladders to extension ladders which must be well supported. They are made of various materials such as fiberglass, aluminum, or wood. Never use a chair, boxes, desk, or other objects not designed for the job.

- ◆ Examine your ladder before you use it. You do not want to use one which is defective or in need of repair...it could mean injury to you!
- ◆ The rungs, side rails and locking spreaders should all be sturdy and in good condition. Oil the spreaders on a regular basis to keep them working smoothly. Do not paint ladders. Cracks and splits may be hidden under the paint and the paint itself may provide a slippery surface.
- ◆ Instead of painting a ladder to protect it, try double coating it with two coats of clear wood preservative such as shellac, varnish, or linseed oil. The steps or rungs should be solid and non-slip.
- ◆ Aluminum ladders should not be bent out of shape. Make sure the ladders are free of grease, clean and dry.
- ◆ Do not use aluminum ladders when working on or near electricity, even if all you are doing is changing a light bulb. Aluminum acts as a conductor for the electricity and you could be seriously injured.
- ◆ How you set up your ladder is important. The area where you are working should be clean, and people should be warned to stay away. The ladder should not be placed on an unstable foundation but rather on a solid, flat surface. Position it so that you can easily reach your work.
- ◆ Stepladders should be fully opened before climbing. Extension ladders should be used with a 1-4 lean ratio. This means that for every four feet of height, the ladder should extend from the supporting wall by one foot. All ladders should be firmly secured to prevent 'kick-out' when being used.
- ◆ When you climb your ladder, have both hands free for climbing. Carry your tools up in a tool belt or placed in a bucket that can be hoisted as you climb.
- ◆ Work smoothly on the ladder, avoiding sudden movements. If you cannot reach without your upper body going beyond the side rails...do not do it!
- ◆ It is not a good idea to work on a ladder outside in bad weather. You could be put at risk by wind, blinded, or faced with slippery conditions by rain or snow.
- ◆ If you are feeling tired, dizzy, or are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, you should not be climbing a ladder. Not only is your judgment impaired, but also your physical agility and sense of balance.
- ◆ For obvious safety reasons, only one person at a time should work on a ladder.
- ◆ When you are finished using your ladder, put it away in a safe, clean area where small children cannot play on it.



When you are up on a ladder, you should also be up on safety. Take the right steps to ensure that you climb with confidence!