



## Portable Ladder Safety

Portable ladders are simple tools used widely in the workplace. However, as with any tool, misuse can result in serious injury or even death.

The following regulations from the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) can help reduce the likelihood of an injury while using a portable ladder.

### STEP ONE: SELECT THE CORRECT LADDER FOR THE JOB

#### Select the correct ladder material

- » **Fiberglass:** Nonconductive, which makes it a good choice when working around electricity. It is also corrosion resistant and ideal for outdoor use.
- » **Aluminum:** Lightweight, but not for use when contact with electricity is possible. It is easy to maneuver when frequent handling is required.
- » **Wood:** Nonconductive, which makes it a good choice for working around electricity. It is an economical choice for heavy maintenance and construction.

#### Select the correct ladder type and capacity

Type	Capacity*	Use
1A	300 lbs.	Extra Heavy-Duty Industrial Contractor
I	250 lbs.	Heavy-Duty Industrial Contractor
II	225 lbs.	Medium-Duty Commercial
III	200 lbs.	Light-Duty Household

*\*Total load capacity includes combined weight of user, tools and any other material on ladders.*

## Select The Correct Ladder Size\*

Stepladders	
Ladder Size	Maximum Standing Height
4 ft.	2 ft.
6	4
8	6
10	8
12	10

Extension Ladders		
Ladder Size	Max. Extended Ladder Length	Max. Working Height
16 ft.	13 ft.	9 ft.
20	17	13
24	21	17
28	25	21
32	29	25
36	32	28
40	35	31

\*A stepladder should be no more than 20 feet high.

\*A one-section ladder should be no more than 30 feet high.

\*An extension ladder can go to 60 feet, but the sections must overlap.

## STEP TWO: USE THE LADDER SAFELY

### Always Inspect A Ladder Before Use To Be Sure That:

- » Steps and rungs are firmly attached and intact, free from grease or oil and have slip-resistant surfaces.
- » Support braces, bolts and screws are all in place and tight.
- » Metal parts are lubricated.
- » Rope is not worn or frayed.
- » Spreaders or other locking devices are in place.
- » Sharp edges are filed or splinters are removed.
- » Metal ladders are not dented or bent.

### Do's And Don'ts Of Portable Ladder Use

#### DO:

- » Make sure only one person is on a ladder at a time.
- » Wear shoes with clean, non-skid, non-leather soles.
- » Face the ladder while climbing up or down and hold the side rails with both hands.
- » Keep your body centered so your belt buckle is between side rails.

- » Carry tools up or down on a belt or a hoist, not in your hands.
- » Ensure that side rails extend at least 36 inches above the bearing point when used to gain access to a roof, floor or a level.
- » Tie off straight ladders at the top, bottom or both, where conditions warrant.
- » Place straight ladders at pitch where the horizontal distance from the top support to the foot of the ladder is no more than four times the base of the ladder.

#### DON'T:

- » Step on the top two stepladder steps or top four ladder rungs.
- » Place ladders on unstable bases such as boxes, barrels, uneven ground, etc.
- » Place ladders in doorways or passageways.
- » Stand on cross bracing.
- » Move, shift or extend a ladder while occupied. Never "walk" a ladder while you are standing on it.

For more information about American Family's Loss Control Services, visit [www.amfam.com](http://www.amfam.com)

#### DISCLAIMER

The recommendations printed here follow generally accepted safety standards. Compliance with these recommendations does not guarantee that you will be in conformance with any building code, or federal, state or local regulations regarding safety or fire. Compliance does not ensure the absolute safety of you, your operations or place of business.