Ladder safety toolbox talk

29 CFR 1926.1053, 1910.23

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

Have you ever stood on the top of a stepladder because the right ladder was too far away?

Why it matters

We use ladders so often that it is easy to stop thinking about them. A ladder fall can start with one quick choice: grabbing the wrong ladder, skipping the setup, or reaching too far. Even a short fall can cause a serious injury.

Key points

1. **Pick the right ladder for the job**
   Use a ladder tall enough to reach the work without standing on the top or overreaching. Check the label for its rated capacity, and remember that the load includes you, your tools and your materials. A ladder must not be loaded beyond its maximum intended load or the manufacturer's rated capacity. If you or the ladder could contact exposed energized electrical equipment, the ladder must have nonconductive side rails, such as fiberglass (29 CFR 1926.1053(b)(12)).
   29 CFR 1926.1053(b)(3)

2. **Inspect it before you climb**
   Check the ladder every time before you use it. Look for cracked, bent or split rails, broken or missing rungs or steps, loose parts, worn feet, and grease or mud. A portable ladder with structural defects must be marked as defective or tagged "Do Not Use" and withdrawn from service until it is repaired.
   29 CFR 1926.1053(b)(16)

3. **Set it up on firm, level ground**
   Ladders must be used only on stable and level surfaces unless they are secured so they cannot be knocked out of place. Keep the area around the top and bottom clear. In a doorway, aisle or driveway, secure the ladder or barricade traffic away from it, and never move or extend a ladder while someone is on it.
   29 CFR 1926.1053(b)(6)

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4 Get the angle and the height right

Set an extension ladder at a safe angle, not too steep and not too flat: with your toes against the ladder feet and your arms straight out, you should be able to grab a rung. When you use a portable ladder to reach an upper level, the side rails must extend at least 3 feet above the landing. If the ladder is too short for that, the top must be secured to a rigid support that will not deflect, and a grasping device, such as a grab rail, must be provided to help you get on and off.

29 CFR 1926.1053(b)(1)

5 Face the ladder and keep a hand on it

Face the ladder when you go up or down, and use at least one hand to grip it while you climb. Do not carry anything that could throw off your balance. Use a tool belt, or raise tools and materials with a hand line.

29 CFR 1926.1053(b)(21)

6 Stepladders have their own rules

Open a stepladder all the way and lock the spreaders before you climb. Never use the top or the top step as a step. Do not climb the back cross-bracing unless the ladder has steps on both sides, and never lean a closed stepladder against a wall to climb it.

29 CFR 1926.1053(b)(13)

Scenario

Picture this: a painter is finishing a ceiling and the last spot is just out of reach. The taller ladder is on the other side of the building, so he steps onto the top cap of his stepladder to get the last few inches. His helper is holding a bucket and is not watching. What should he have done, and what would you say if you saw it?

Crew discussion

1. Which ladders on this job are the right height for the work we are doing this week?
2. What would make you take a ladder out of service?
3. Where on this site is it hard to set a ladder on firm, level ground, and how should we handle it?
4. How will you get your tools and materials up without carrying them in your hands?

Bottom line **Pick the right ladder, check it, set it up right, and keep a hand on it every time you climb.**

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Ladder safety / Seguridad con escaleras

Date / Fecha _____

Trainer / Instructor _____ Location / Lugar _____ Company / Empresa _____

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