

Ladder Safety



Toolbox Talk #11

Ladder usage is very common for every type of trade at WMU. Unfortunately, so are ladder injuries. Strains and sprains from overreaching, missed rungs, falls, and pain from carrying heavy equipment have happened. It is important to stay conscious and actively think about what you are doing and where your body is placed when using a ladder. Below are some helpful tips to remind you what you should be doing and thinking about while using a ladder.

Inspect:

- Make sure your ladder does not have any loose, broken, or missing rungs, split or bent side rails, or other defects.
- Rungs are free of grease, oil, or other slippery substances
- The ladder's hardware and fittings are secure and undamaged
- If there are any defects in the ladder, mark it appropriately and do not use it

Set-Up:

- Ladder top is resting against a firm structure and is on hard, level ground
- If climbing to reach roof: Ensure ladder is extending 3 feet above the structure you are climbing
- If using to work on object: Top of the ladder should be no more than 2 feet below the working level.
- For every 4 rungs, place the ladder back 1 foot (4 to 1 angle)
- When feasible, secure ladder with ropes/ties from the top or bottom
- If ladder can't be tied down, have another employee secure ladder while you use it
- If using in a high-traffic area, put caution signs around ladder

Usage:

- Face the ladder
- When climbing or descending, ensure 3 parts of your body are in contact with the ladder at all times (2 hands, 1 foot)/ (2 feet, 1 hand)
- Keep your center of gravity between the side rails, do not overreach to the sides
- Do not carry heavy, bulky, or hazardous materials when climbing ladders
 - Use a bucket and rope or other means to lift heavy objects to the work area
- Avoid the top few steps of the ladder:
 - Stay off the top 2 steps for a stepladder
 - Stay off the top 4 rungs of a straight ladder
- Return the ladder to its designated area when finished



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