



# fast facts

advancing safety, health, and workplace rights in the legislative branch

## Stepladders

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A stepladder is a very handy, simple tool to use, but if you do not choose the right one for the job or if it is not properly maintained, then you have an increased risk of an injury. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), falls are one of the top five causes of fatal occupational injuries.

### Duty of Employers

- Purchase and maintain stepladders that comply with applicable standards.
  - ◊ ANSI-ASC A14.2-2007 through A14.5-2007
  - ◊ Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 29 CFR§ 1910.25(d), .26(c) and 1926.1053
- Provide training to all employees who use ladders.
- Ensure that protective measures are followed.
- Train the user on how to conduct an inspection of the step ladder. It is recommended in American National Standards Institute (ANSI A14.series – Standards on Ladders) to inspect before and after each use to prevent injuries.
- If damage is found, tag and remove from service stating “**Do Not Use**”.

### Choosing the Right Ladder

Stepladders are made in a wide variety of materials: metal/aluminum, wood and fiberglass. Choosing the right ladder for the job is very important. Because wood and metal are great conductors of electricity, it would be best to use a fiberglass ladder if you are doing electrical work.

### Load Limits

Even though they may all look the same, each ladder has a different load limit. You want to make sure that the ladder you are using is designed to carry your weight and the weight of the equipment being

Ladder Type	Load Limit	Description
Type 1-AA	375 lbs.	Special Duty
Type 1-A	300 lbs.	Heavy Duty Industrial
Type I	250 lbs.	Heavy Duty
Type II	225 lbs.	Medium Duty
Type III	200 lbs.	Light Duty

carried up and down the ladder. Otherwise, the ladder may become unstable and cause injury.

**CAUTION:** When working at heights greater than 20’, it is recommended that a ladder other than a stepladder is used.



## Safety Inspection

Stepladders are sturdy and durable but have several parts that are subject to corrosion and normal wear and tear from everyday use. Hinges can be damaged by a shift in weight or by folding them incorrectly when the job is complete. It is a good idea, and a requirement by OSHA, to inspect ladders for any type of damage that might cause them to be unserviceable.

Inspect **all** ladders for loose steps. Steps also need to be sturdy, clean and not slippery from dirt or oil. Don't forget to check for cracks, splits, or rotting. The legs should be strong and visibly free of cracks, splits and bent edges. Nails, bolts, screws and other fasteners should be tight. Never paint any part of a wooden stepladder, as this could hide cracks or other damage. Last but not least, examine the feet and

make sure the non-slip pads are in good shape.



**Remember:** Turn broken ladders in for repair or take them completely out of service by marking them with a tag saying “**Do Not Use**”, to prevent employees and co-workers from using them.

## Safe Ladder Use

Now that you have chosen the right ladder for the job and completed a visual inspection, here are some useful tips. As stated, every year there are countless fatalities and injuries due to lack of knowledge on how to properly use a stepladder. No matter what type or height of stepladder used, follow the important safety tips listed below.

### Step Ladder Do's

- Always lock the spreader arms in the fully open position.
- Face the ladder and maintain 3-point contact with 2 hands and a foot, or 2 feet and a hand when climbing up or down a step ladder.



- Use a tool belt to keep your hands free or pull materials up with a line.
- Whenever possible, use stepladders for access, not as work platforms.
- It is generally safer to work from scaffolding, a scissor lift or boom lift. Select the appropriate stepladder

### Step Ladder Don'ts



Never stand on top step of the ladder



Do not balance ladder on other objects



Never stand on the top step of an unopened step ladder

- Do not use a damaged or defective stepladder.
- Don't use an unopened stepladder as a straight ladder.
- Never balance a ladder on other objects to reach higher jobs.
- Don't stand higher than the second step from the top.
- Never straddle space between a stepladder and another point.
- Never overstretch to do your work; if you are leaning to the right, left or backwards, move the ladder into a better position.

## Training Requirements

OSHA requires employers to provide training. The program must enable the employee to recognize hazards related to ladders and how to eliminate them. A competent person should be designated to train employees on the nature of fall hazards in the work area, including correct procedures for placement, care in handling ladders, and maximum intended load-carrying capacities of ladders. Employees will need retraining to maintain understanding and knowledge.

### fast stats

#### *Top 5 OSHA Violations for Stepladders*

- 29 CFR§ 1926.1053** - This standard covers general requirements for all ladders.
- §1910.1053 (b) (1)** - Failure to extend a portable ladder at least 3 feet above the upper landing surface to which the ladder is used to gain access.
- §1910.1053 (b) (4)** - Using ladders for a purpose other than for which they were designed.
- §1926.1053 (b) (13)** - Using the top of a stepladder as a step.
- §1926.1053 (b) (16)** - Failure to mark portable ladders with structural defects as such or withdraw them from service until repaired.
- §1926.1053 (b) (22)** - Employee carrying an object or load that could cause him or her to lose balance and fall.



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