

# Safety Brief: Ladder and Stair Work

---

## Rules and Requirements

- Working with ladders
  - All
    - Ladders must be inspected by a competent person for visible defects on a periodic basis and after any incident that could affect their safe use.
    - There is no OSHA required documentation for ladder inspections, however visual inspections do not provide documentation of the inspection.
    - Ladders will always be used only when a better option is not available
    - Only Type IAA, IA, I, and II ladders may be used in the workplace.
    - All manufacturer warning labels must be legible and affixed to the ladder.
    - Ladders must be maintained free of oil, grease, and other slipping hazards. Ladders must not be loaded beyond the maximum intended load for which they were built or beyond their manufacturer's rated capacity.
    - Ladders must be used only on stable and level surfaces, unless secured to prevent accidental movement.
    - Ladders must be used only for the purpose for which they were designed.
    - Ladders must not be used on slippery surfaces unless secured or provided with slip-resistant feet to prevent accidental movement. Slip-resistant feet must not be used as a substitute for the care in placing, lashing, or holding a ladder on slippery surfaces.
    - Ladders placed in areas such as passageways, doorways, driveways, or areas where they may be displaced by workplace activities or traffic must be secured to prevent accidental movement, or a barricade must be used to keep traffic or activities away from the ladder.
    - Ladders must not be moved, shifted, or extended while in use.
    - Ladders must have nonconductive side rails if they are used where the worker or the ladder could contact exposed, energized, electrical equipment.
    - An employee on a ladder must not carry any object or load that could cause the worker to lose balance and fall.
    - When ascending or descending a ladder, employees must face the ladder.
    - Three points of contact must be maintained while working from, ascending and descending.
  - Step
    - Never stand on either of the top two rungs.
    - Never stand on a folded step ladder leaned against a wall or other surface.
      - **LeanSafe Ladders are now acceptable**
    - All four feet must be on the ground or floor
    - Cross braces must be fully down
  - Extension
    - When portable extension ladders are used for access to an upper landing surface, the ladder must be secured and the side rails must extend at least three feet above the upper landing surface, or have a grasping device such as a grab rail provided to assist workers in mounting and dismounting the ladder.
    - A ladder extension or grasping device must not deflect under a load that would cause the ladder to slip off its support. The ladder needs to be secured.
    - Non-self-supporting ladders (straight and extension ladders) must be used at an angle where the horizontal distance from the top support to the foot of the ladder is approximately one-quarter of the working length of the ladder. Use the

# Safety Brief: Ladder and Stair Work

---

ratio of “one out for every four up” to ensure proper angle of ladder. Fixed ladders must be used at a pitch no greater than 90 degrees.

- The area around the top and bottom of ladders must be kept clear for safe access and egress.
- **Never work from an extension ladder leaned against a wall.**
- Defective Ladders
  - Portable ladders with structural defects such as broken or missing rungs, cleats, or steps; broken or split rails; corroded components; or any other defects must immediately be marked defective or tagged with “Do Not Use” or similar language and removed from service until repaired.
  - Fixed ladders with structural defects must be removed from service until repaired.
    - Defective fixed ladders are considered removed from use when they are:
      - Immediately tagged with “Do Not Use” or similar language,
      - Marked in a manner that identifies them as defective
  - Ladder repairs must restore the ladder to a condition meeting its original design criteria before the ladder is returned to use. Always consult the manufacturer’s recommendations and specifications prior to repairing any ladder.