

Ladder Safety

Ladders are one of the most frequently used pieces of equipment in the workplace, but they can also be a significant source of injuries when used improperly. Taking a few moments to inspect your ladder, set it up correctly, and use it safely can help prevent falls and other incidents. Before starting any task, ensure the right ladder is selected for the job and that both the ladder and work area are safe to use.

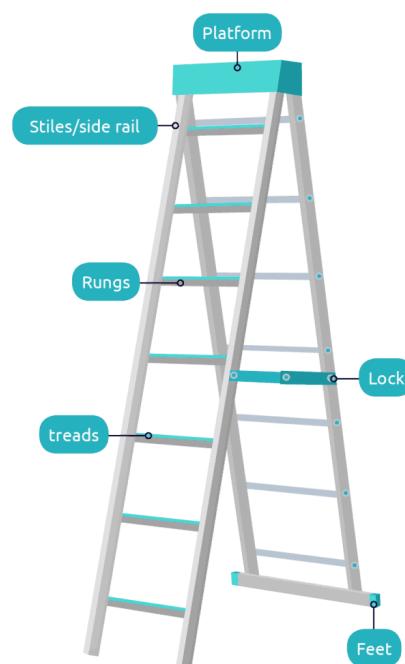
Inspect Before You Climb

Before using any ladder, complete a pre-use inspection to ensure it is safe and in good working condition. Inspections should be conducted before each use and after any event that could affect the ladder's condition, such as being dropped, struck, or exposed to harsh conditions. Refer to the ladder inspection checklist below to verify the ladder is fit for use.

If any damage, defects, or safety concerns are identified, remove the ladder from service immediately and report it according to workplace procedures. Never use a damaged ladder or attempt temporary repairs. Repairs should only be completed by an authorized person in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements.

Ladder Inspection Checklist

- ☐ Rungs and steps are secure and undamaged.
- ☐ Side rails are free from cracks, splits, or bends.
- ☐ Bolts, screws, hinges, and spreaders are secure.
- ☐ Ladder is stable and free from excessive wear.
- ☐ Safety labels are present and legible.
- ☐ Locks, ropes, chains, and pulleys are in good condition.
- ☐ Moving parts operate smoothly.
- ☐ Ladder is clean and free from slippery substances.
- ☐ No damage from impact, misuse, or improper storage.



Set Up Safely

Before using a ladder, take time to ensure it is set up correctly and that the surrounding work area is safe. Clear away debris, materials, and other tripping hazards, place the ladder on a firm, level, non-slip surface. Position the ladder to provide safe access to the work area, secure it where required, and use a spotter when necessary.

For extension ladders, place the base far enough from the structure to keep the ladder stable, and make sure the ladder extends above the landing area so you can safely step on and off. Never use a metal ladder near active electrical equipment or overhead power lines and avoid ladder work when weather conditions could make the ladder unsafe to use.

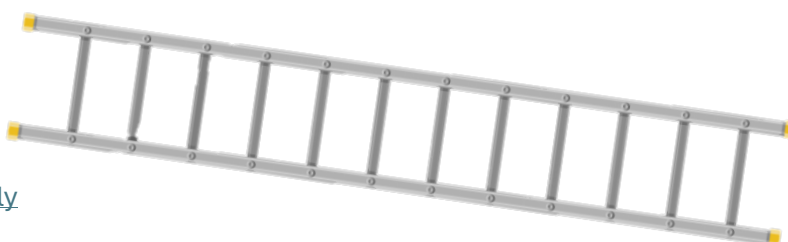
Resources:

- [WCB: Ladder Safety](#)
- [CCOHS: Ladder Inspection](#)
- [CCOHS: Climbing Up and Down Safely](#)
- [CCOHS: Ladder Extension](#)

Climb With Care

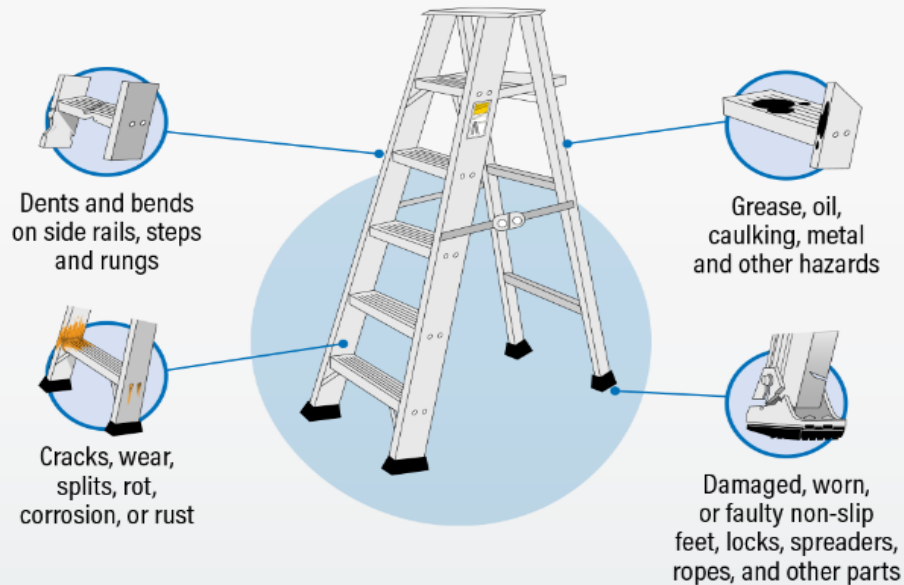
Once the ladder is set up, use it safely at all times. Always face the ladder when climbing and maintain three points of contact whenever possible. Keep your body centered between the side rails and avoid leaning or reaching too far to the side. If you cannot comfortably reach your work, climb down and reposition the ladder.

Carry tools using a tool belt, hoist line, or other method that keeps your hands free while climbing. Never stand on the top step, top cap, or above the manufacturer's recommended climbing height, as this can reduce stability and increase the risk of falling.



Ladder Safety

Inspect the ladder before each use



Employer responsibilities

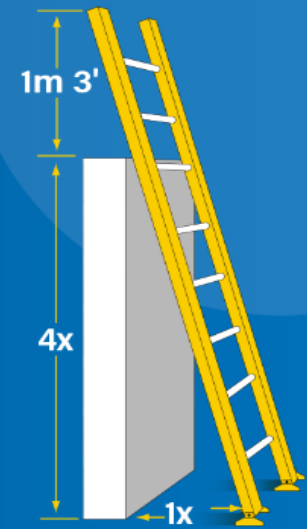
- Check for a safer alternative to using a ladder.
- Use CSA-approved ladders that are suitable for the job.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions and legal requirements for ladder use, maintenance, and repairs. Remove or dispose of damaged ladders.
- Train workers on safe ladder use.



Learn more about ladder safety: www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/ladders

Setup and placement

- Set the ladder on a firm, level and non-slippery surface. Make sure the surface and ladder feet are clean.
- Secure the base and top. Use a spotter when needed.
- Clear the area around the base and remove unstable material and debris. Place suitable barriers in high traffic areas.
- Use the 1:4 rule for an extension ladder (base should be one foot away from wall for every four feet in height), with at least three feet extending above the point of support.
- Do not use metal ladders near live electrical equipment or wires.
- Do not use ladders in poor weather.



Using a ladder

- Clean any loose or slippery material off footwear.
- Face the ladder when climbing and working.
- Maintain three-point contact – keep two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand on the ladder.
- Keep your centre of gravity between the side rails.
- Use a hoist rope or tool belt to carry tools or materials.
- Stand no higher than the third or fourth rung from the top when working.



Always use fall protection when working at or above three metres.



Canada

CCOHS.ca
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety