

## FOUR BIGGETS LADDER MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE

### Ladder Injury Statistics

A Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) report on ladder safety showed some startling statistics concerning the frequency and severity of ladder-related accidents in the United States. Every year thousands of people are injured and hundreds are killed. By understanding the causes of ladder accidents the vast majority could be prevented.

- More than **90,000 people receive emergency room treatment** from ladder-related injuries every year
- Elevated falls account for almost **700 occupational deaths** annually
- These deaths account for 15% of all occupational deaths
- OSHA believes 100% of all ladder accidents could be prevented if proper attention to equipment and climber training were provided
- Over the last 10 years the amount of ladder-related injuries has increased 50%
- According the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 50% of all ladder-related **accidents were due to individuals carrying items as they climbed**
- The most common type of ladder-related injury, with 32%, is fractures

### Main Types of Ladder Accidents

Ladder accidents are extremely common even though they are entirely preventable. Ladder accidents can come from a wide variety of issues, but the following four causes account for the vast majority and if the simple loss prevention tips for each cause are followed ladder accidents can almost be eliminated.

#### 1. Selecting the Wrong Type of Ladder

Like most other jobs, choosing the right tool can make all of the difference when it comes to safety and this is the same for ladders. One thing to consider when selecting an appropriate ladder is the ladder's weight capacity. Each ladder is designed to support a maximum weight limit and if the climber exceeds that limit the ladder could break and cause the user to fall or become injured.

Another consideration when selecting the appropriate ladder for a job is the necessary height of the ladder. Many injuries occur due to ladders being too short for a specific task, and instead of selecting a new ladder for the job, workers will place the ladder on something to extend its reach or will stand on the top rung to gain the necessary height. Both scenarios are extremely dangerous and can result in serious injuries.

## 2. Using Worn or Damaged Ladders

Another common contributing factor to ladder accidents is the use of old, worn, or damaged ladders. Like everything else, ladders have a shelf life; after a couple of years the stress of being climbed up and down on causes ladders to break down. Damaged ladders are extremely dangerous as they can easily break while being used and cause serious injuries.

To protect yourself from damaged or broken ladders make sure to thoroughly inspect each ladder before using it. If any damage is found do not use the ladder until it has been safely repaired to the manufacturer's specifications or it has been replaced.

## 3. Incorrect Use of Ladders

Human error is by far the leading cause of ladder accidents. Never use a ladder in any other way than what the manufacturer intended it to be used for. A-frame ladders are only to be used with the legs open and the spreaders locked; they are not to be leaned against a wall, structure, or material stacks to work at height. Also, do not lengthen or alter a ladder in any way.

While using a ladder **always maintain 3 points of contact** with the ladder to ensure stability. If you must carry tools to work, use tool bags or place them in a bucket that can be raised to the work level with rope attached to the handle, or have a coworker hand them up to you. Also, never attempt to reach for something while on the ladder, it is much safer to get off the ladder, move it, and then climb back up.

## 4. Incorrect Placement of Ladders

Make sure that when positioning a ladder the ground you place it on is level and firm. Ladders should never be placed in front of a door that is not locked, blocked, or guarded.

A good practice to ensure a ladder is secure is to always have a helper support the base while a ladder is being used. If the ladder cannot be held by someone else make sure it has an appropriate foot to prevent it from slipping. The feet of the ladder can be staked if you are using a ladder outside and no one is available to support the feet of the ladder.

Non-self-supporting ladders, which must lean against a wall or other support, are to be positioned at such an angle that the horizontal distance from the top support to the foot of the ladder is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  the working length of the ladder. Once set in place, the ladder should be secured to prevent it from sliding or moving during use.



Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### WEEKLY SAFETY PROGRAM REVIEW AND PRESENTATION

1. Remind all employees that it is their right to a safe work place. Each employee is responsible to report and respond to unsafe work practices and conditions.

2. Review of recent incidents, injuries, and reported near misses.

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3. Recent observations, safety violations, and demonstrated lack of knowledge or skills.

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4. Employee suggested corrective actions for avoiding future reoccurrences.

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5. Existing and upcoming work activities and potential hazards. Include review of supporting materials or documents and demonstrate safe work procedures.

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6. Employee workplace safety concerns and recommendations.

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7. Safety topic presentation. Include review of company policies, procedures, and location specific expectations. Encourage questions and clarifications.

8. Additional meeting notes.

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Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Instructor 2:	
Translator:	