



## **Toolbox Talks for Club Employees: Ladder Safety**

Ladders are very useful to us both on and off the job. However, when misused, ladders can also cause severe injuries. Deaths, severe spinal injuries and paralysis are the possible kinds of injuries that have resulted from falls off ladders, even at heights of less than six feet from the floor. Most ladder falls are the result of both unsafe physical conditions of the ladder or surrounding area, and unsafe acts by the person using the ladder. And like many accidents, falls from ladders could be avoided if you follow these basic safety tips:

1. Do not climb ladders outdoors during adverse weather conditions (e.g., high wind, rain, snow, ice, etc.).
2. A simple rule for setting up a ladder at the proper angle is to place the base a distance from the vertical wall equal to one-fourth the working length of the ladder.
3. Only use ladders on stable and level surfaces unless secured to prevent their accidental displacement. Do not use non-self-supporting ladders on slippery surfaces unless secured or provided with slip-resistant feet to prevent accidental displacement.
4. Extend ladder side rails at least three feet above the landing surface to which the ladder is used to gain access. Do not use the top or top step of a step-ladder as a step.
5. Always keep the area around the base and the top clear of unnecessary materials and equipment since these can cause a slip or trip hazard to people working on the ladder.
6. When climbing or descending the ladder, always face the ladder and use both hands. Tools and materials should be raised or lowered by hand lines or other means. They should not be carried while ascending or descending the ladder.
7. Metal spreader or locking devices must be provided on stepladders to hold the front and back sections in an open position when ladders are in use.
8. Ladders must not be set up in any location where they can be displaced by other activities unless they are secured or barricaded to keep the activities away.
9. If the ladder is damaged or badly worn and loose, take it out of service. Do not allow damaged ladders to remain in service when they could injure a fellow worker.

Ladder safety is something too easily taken for granted. Just remember that an unexpected fall could cause you a lot of unnecessary pain and suffering.

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