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## ACCESSING SAFETY KNOWLEDGE (ASK) SHEET: *LADDER USE HIGHLIGHT*

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The key elements to be considered in the use of and observing the regulations regarding ladders are:

- Ladders shall be used only for the purpose for which they were designed.
- Ladders shall not be loaded beyond the maximum intended load, or beyond their manufacturer's rated capacity. The Maximum Weight Load Label must be affixed to the ladder and be legible.
- Ladder steps shall be parallel, level, and uniformly spaced when the ladder is in position for use.
- Steps of portable ladders shall be spaced not less than 10 inches (25 cm) apart, nor more than 14 inches (36 cm) apart; the minimum clear distance between side rails for all portable ladders shall be 11 and 1/2 inches (29 cm).
- When portable ladders are used for access to an upper landing surface, the ladder side rails shall extend at least 3 feet (.9 m) above the upper landing surface; the ladder shall be secured at its top to a rigid support that will not deflect.
- The distance between the wall and the bottom of the ladder should be no more nor less than 1/4<sup>th</sup> the length of the ladder from floor to top point (1:4 ratio, i.e. 1 foot out (horizontal) for each four-foot vertical).
- Ladders shall be maintained free of oil, grease, and other slipping hazards.
- Ladders shall be used only on stable and level surfaces unless secured to prevent accidental displacement.
- The area around the top and bottom of ladders shall be kept clear.
- Ladders shall not be moved, shifted, or extended while occupied. This is commonly referred to as "walking the ladder".
- Ladders shall have nonconductive side rails if they are used where the employee or the ladder could contact exposed energized electrical equipment.
- The top or top step of a stepladder shall not be used as a step.
- Cross-bracing on the rear section of stepladders shall not be used for climbing unless the ladders are designed and provided with steps for climbing on both front and rear sections.
- Ladders shall be inspected by a competent person for visible defects before use at the beginning of each shift and after any occurrence that could affect their safe use.
- Portable ladders with structural defects shall be tagged with "Do Not Use."
- When ascending or descending a ladder, the user shall face the ladder; three points of contact should be maintained when ascending or descending a ladder. An employee shall not carry any object or load that could cause the employee to lose balance and fall.
- Fall protection is not required when using portable ladders, but is advisable when practical to use.

***Provided by the ASA – Houston Chapter Safety Committee – September 2017***

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