



# FALL PREVENTION ALLIANCE TOOLBOX TALK ON LADDER USE HIGHLIGHTS

Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Site Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Foreman/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

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 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 1/4th the length of the ladder from floor to top point (1:4 ratio, i.e. 1 foot out (horizontal) for each four-feet 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.
- Ladders shall have nonconductive siderails 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.

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Through the OSHA and Houston Fall Prevention Alliance, this Toolbox Talk was developed for informational purposes only. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor. July 2016.

The Houston Fall Prevention Alliance was formed by the below organizations to provide their members, and others, with information, guidance and access to training resources that will help them protect the health and safety of workers, particularly by reducing and preventing exposure to fall hazards in the construction industries and addressing fall related issues and understand the rights of workers and the responsibilities of employers under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act). In developing this alliance, these organizations recognize that OSHA's State Plan and On-site Consultation Project partners are an integral part of the OSHA national effort.





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