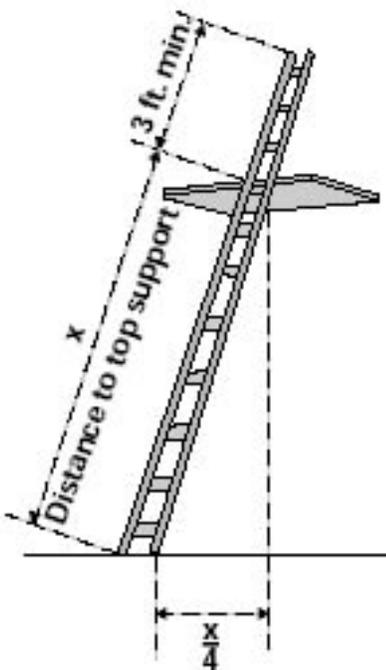


# Ladder Safety

Ladders are a commonly used piece of equipment both in the workplace and at home. Working with a ladder may seem straight forward enough, but keep in mind that gravity is a force working tirelessly to bring you back to the ground. Each year there are more than 164,000 emergency room-treated injuries in the U.S. relating to ladders and most ladder deaths involve falls from 10 feet or less.

No person ever *plans* to fall and it happens in an instant. Whether your task is cleaning gutters, hanging structural supports for a roof or changing a light bulb, safe practices should always be utilized in the set up and use your ladder.

- Make sure the weight your ladder is supporting does not exceed its maximum load rating (user plus materials). There should only be one person on the ladder at one time.
- Always maintain a 3-point (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand) contact on the ladder when climbing. Keep your body near the middle of the step and always face the ladder while climbing (see diagram).
- Always inspect the ladder prior to using it. If the ladder is damaged, it must be removed from service and tagged until repaired or discarded.
- Only use ladders and appropriate accessories (ladder levelers, jacks or hooks) for their designed purposes.
- Use a ladder that is the proper length for the job. Proper length is a minimum of 3 feet extending over the roofline or working surface. The three top rungs of a straight, single or extension ladder should not be stood on.



- Straight, single or extension ladders should be set up at about a 75-degree angle.
- Metal ladders will conduct electricity. Use a wooden or fiberglass ladder in the vicinity of power lines or electrical equipment. Do not let a ladder made from any material contact live electric wires.
- Be sure all locks on extension ladders are properly engaged.
- Use a ladder only on a stable and level surface, unless it has been secured (top or bottom) to prevent displacement.
- Do not place a ladder in front of a door that is not locked, blocked or guarded. A ladder placed in any location

where it can be displaced by other work activities must be secured to prevent displacement or a barricade must be erected to keep traffic away from the ladder.

- Keep your body centered between the rails of the ladder at all times. Do not lean too far to the side while working.
- Do not use a ladder for any purpose other than that for which it was intended.
- Do not step on the top step, bucket shelf or attempt to climb or stand on the rear section of a stepladder.
- Never leave a raised ladder unattended.
- Follow use instruction labels on ladders.

**State of Wisconsin, Bureau of State Risk Management**

*Sources: OSHA, CPSC*

Additional Reference:

<http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3124.pdf>