

Ladder safety

Hazards include trips and falls.

Intro

Falls from portable ladders are the leading type of fall to a lower level in the retail and wholesale trade sector. These types of falls typically lead to employees having seven to 11 lost time days as they recover from their injuries which range from minor sprains and fractures to serious head injuries and even paralysis or death.

Setting up the ladder

- Inspect the ladder for damage and that the floor surface is level, dry, and free of debris
- Make sure step style ladders are fully open with spreader bar secured in place and all four feet touching the floor surface
- Free-standing ladders should only be placed against solid vertical surfaces that will not move or give. For every 4 feet of height, the base of the free-standing ladder should be one foot from the vertical surface
- Position the ladder so that your work is within reach
- Do not lean off the ladder
- You may need to get off the ladder and move it to continue work

Ascending the ladder

- Always maintain three points of contact
- Always keep your belt buckle and center of gravity (chest) between the ladder rails to avoid tipping the ladder or losing balance
- Do not step on the top two rungs of the ladder

Descending the ladder

- Users can mistakenly think that their foot is about to touch the floor when they are still a few feet from the floor
- Be aware of potential missteps and be cautious when descending

Transporting items or tools

- Workers in retail and warehouse locations are often using ladders and rolling stairs to retrieve or store items. Three points of contact are always needed to safely ascend or descend a portable ladder, which is possible only if both hands are free for holding onto the ladder
- One solution is for the worker to lower the item in a container or basket. A co-worker can help keep the ladder secure and take the item(s) from the basket. If no co-worker is available to help, then the ladder-climber can put the item in a shoulder bag or backpack. This prevents visual obstruction and frees both hands for descending

Site specific requirements:

Employee participants:

Date:
