

Ladder safety

Whether you're using a ladder to change a light bulb at home or climbing a ladder on a worksite, it's important to keep safety in mind.

Follow these tips to help make working with ladders less hazardous:

- Before using a ladder, inspect it for faults, such as broken rungs or rails. If you're using an extension ladder, inspect the pulleys, ropes, and locks for excessive wear. Also, check the footings and pads to make sure they still provide a non-skid surface. If you find any defects, tag the ladder as unsafe and take it out of service. If the defect can't be fixed, make sure the ladder is disposed of properly.
- When setting up a ladder, make sure the ground is level and stable. Don't set the ladder up on a muddy surface or use bricks or other material to raise the height of the ladder.
- The ladder should reach a minimum of three feet above the point of support and should be secured.
- When using extension ladders, abide by the 1:4 rule. This means if you are using a 12-foot ladder, the base should be three feet from the structure. Some ladders provide a picture guide on the ladder itself to assist you in this.
- When using a stepladder, make sure the folding cross braces are locked in the proper position before you step onto it.
- Always face the ladder when ascending or descending, and have both hands free to grasp it securely. If you need tools, they should be carried in a tool belt or pulled up with a rope once you have reached your destination.
- Remember the 3-Point Rule: At least two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand, should be in contact with the ladder at all times.
- Keep your body between the side rails of the ladder. This reduces the chance of tipping it over and/or falling off.
- Don't climb higher than the third rung from the top on straight or extension ladders or the second tread from the top on stepladders.



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