

March is National Ladder Safety Month



What is National Ladder Safety Month?

National Ladder Safety Month, observed in March and spearheaded by the American Ladder Institute (ALI), is the only program dedicated exclusively to promoting ladder safety, at home and work. Each year, tens of thousands of injuries and hundreds of deaths are caused by ladder misuse. By providing critical guidelines and raising awareness on safe use, we can help decrease these numbers.

ALI, the only approved developer of safety standards for the U.S. ladder industry, is the presenting sponsor for National Ladder Safety Month.

ALI believes ladder accidents are preventable with thorough safety planning, training, and continuous innovation in product design. The more people, organizations, and **(continued on page 2)**

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Choosing your ladder



One of the most common mistakes made by ladder users is choosing the wrong ladder for the job. Here are some things to consider:

- Take into account your work environment when choosing your ladder. For example, if you're working near sources of electricity, do not use a metal/aluminum ladder. Evaluate the surface on which the ladder will be resting. Is it uneven? Consider if there are any obstructions in the path of the climb. Your environment will also help you determine the type of ladder you need for the task — self-supporting stepladder or non-self-supporting single or extension ladder.
- Consider the length of ladder you need. It is unsafe to use a ladder that is too long or too short. When using a step ladder, for example, it is unsafe to stand on the top rung as it increases the likelihood of losing your balance. Likewise, when using an extension ladder, the top three rungs are not to be used for climbing. An extension ladder is too long if it extends more than 3 feet beyond the upper support point, as it can act like a lever and cause the base of the ladder to move or slide out.
- Pay attention to the Duty Rating of your ladder. The Duty Rating is the total amount of weight your ladder will support. A taller ladder does not equate to a higher weight rating. Here is the simple calculation for determining the Duty Rating needed for the job at hand:

Your weight, weight of your protective clothing & equipment, weight of your tools & supplies being used equals **Duty Rating**.



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(continued from page 1) businesses get involved, the wider the message spreads, and the more people learn about proper ladder safety.

The goals of National Ladder Safety Month are to:

- Decrease number of ladder-related injuries and fatalities
- Increase the number of ladder safety training certificates issued by ALI
- Increase the frequency that ladder safety training
- Lower the rankings of ladder-related safety citations on OSHA's yearly "Top 10 Citations List"
- Increase the number of in-person ladder trainings
- Increase the number of companies and individuals that inspect and properly dispose of old, damaged or obsolete ladders.

Safety Before the First Step

Are you taking the time to properly inspect your ladders before starting to work? A thorough inspection must be made when the ladder is initially purchased and each time it is placed into service. Here are a few reminders of what you should be inspecting:

- Locks and spreader braces
- Steps and rungs
- Rails
- Connections and fasteners
- Safety shoes
- Ropes and pulleys

Here are some steps to follow before taking your first step onto the ladder:

- Thoroughly inspect the ladder to ensure it is in good working condition.
- Clean the ladder feet as well as the climbing and gripping surfaces.
- Read the safety information label(s) on the ladder.
- Confirm that the ground where the ladder is set-up is firm and level, or use approved accessories, such as ladder levelers.
- Ensure that any surrounding doors are blocked from opening, locked or properly guarded.
- If you're using a ladder outdoors, ensure that the weather is safe for ladder use.
- Clean the soles of your shoes to maximize traction and avoid slipping.
- Ensure that you are not tired, dizzy or prone to losing your balance before using the ladder.
- Use towlines, a tool belt or an assistant to carry materials so that your hands are free when climbing.

Safety While Climbing (Up and Down)

Factors that contribute to falls from ladders include:

- Haste or sudden movement
- Overreaching
- Lack of attention
- Improper climbing posture, such as standing too high or straddling the ladder
- Carrying objects and not maintaining three points of contact

Practice safe climbing by:

- Being attentive to what you are doing and your surroundings.
- Using towlines, a tool belt or an assistant to convey materials so that your hands are free when climbing.
- Climbing slowly and deliberately while avoiding sudden movements.
- Never attempting to move a ladder while standing on it.
- Keeping the center of your stomach between the ladder side rails when climbing (and while working). Do not overreach or lean while working so that you don't fall off the ladder sideways or pull the ladder over sideways while standing on it.

The Three Points of Contact Rule

The Three Points of Contact Rule minimizes the chance of slipping and falling from the ladder. The climber should face the ladder and have two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder at all times

Safety at the Top

Just as it's important to pay attention while climbing and descending a ladder, it is important to follow safety rules while working on the ladder:

- Don't stand on the top step or top cap.
- Maintain Three Points of Contact.
- Don't overreach.

Safety Tip of the Month

A clean place is a safe place. Good housekeeping can reduce the number of injuries in your workplace. Especially around ladders.

Keep Safety First!

Notes From the Editor

Send articles or opinions to:

Bill Devinney, Owner/Safety Consultant
Safetydude, LLC
4836 Hardware Dr. NE Suite A
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Phone: 505-259-8556
Or e-mail me at devinneywilliamr@msn.com