

Extension Ladders at Home

Many of us have struggled at home or in the yard with extension ladders. Don't let it be a struggle. Follow the procedures you know from work and let safety rule the roost.

Whether you're getting on the roof, picking apples from a high tree, or painting the garage, follow proper safety procedures. Secure your ladder, make sure its



parts are working well, and set at the right angle (4-to-1).

If the ladder angle is too low (less than 4-to-1), the side rails can break or the ladder can slip out at the bottom.

At too high an angle, it will be awkward and hazardous as you will have to "belly up" the ladder. Do not let your family and neighbours catch you doing exactly what the boss says not to!

If you find something wrong with your ladder—do not use it. Get it repaired, or use a new one that's in good repair.

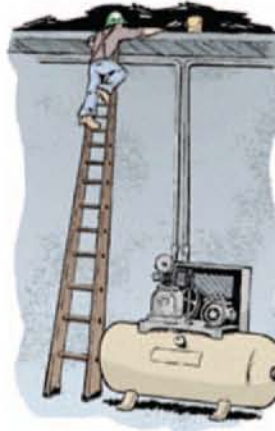
Do not paint a wooden ladder—paint may hide cracks and splits. Use a clear wood preservative instead so you can examine the ladder properly.

Conclusion

The key to ladder safety is selecting the right ladder for the job. Clean footwear, use of both hands while climbing, and proper setup will reduce the chances of injury. Secure the ladder at the top and bottom and make sure it is at the appropriate angle.

By following these safety tips, you'll be taking several steps in the right direction.

For more information, refer to current applicable Occupational Health and Safety Legislation.



The Alberta Construction Safety Association's mission is to provide quality advice and education for the construction industry that will reduce human suffering and financial costs associated with workplace incidents. This brochure is part of a series, **The Toolbox Brochures**, which are available on a variety of safety topics. If you have any questions or comments please contact:



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Extension Ladders



Making Safety A Way Of Life



The Alberta Construction Safety Association

A Helpful Tool

Extension ladders are very helpful tools when used properly. Selecting the right ladder for the job is the first crucial step on the road to safety.

If a step ladder won't work, a proper sized extension ladder is your best bet. Do not be careless. Make sure the equipment works well and follow appropriate safety procedures.

A review of Workers' Compensation statistics or other sources will tell you many situations of incidents where various factors caused a fall while using a ladder. It makes for horrifying reading. Most incidents involving ladders could have been prevented if proper safety procedures had been followed.

There is no such thing as a good fall. Even a fall from a low height can result in a serious head injury or broken bones.

Think about your safety plans before you set up your ladder.

Setup and Layout

The best way to ensure an incident free record when working with ladders, is to follow proper setup and layout procedures.

Follow safe work procedures and you will reduce the risk of falls and other incidents.

When you are setting up an extension ladder:

- Ensure manufactured portable ladders comply with CSA and ANSI standards.
- Make sure the ladder is placed on even ground and within reach of your work.



- Use anti-skid adjustable feet, secure blocking, or have someone hold the ladder.
- Do not use any ladder (even wood) near electrical circuits or power lines.
- Extend the ladder 1 m (3 feet) above a landing if you are using it for access.
- Rest both side rails on the top support and secure them against movement.
- Do not stand a ladder on ice or snow.
- Do not use an unstable object—like a rock or a brick—to level the ladder's feet.
- If you are setting up in front of a closed door, open the door or lock it.
- Do not use the two top rungs of the ladder.
- To get extra height, do not stand a ladder on another object—get a ladder that's the right height for the job.
- In some instances, you may be required to use a personal fall arrest system when using a portable ladder.

Maintenance

Always inspect the ladder before using it. Look for:

- Cracks
- Splits
- Twisted or jammed parts
- Loose screws, rivets, or rungs



Balancing Your Safety Act

Climbing and balancing on a ladder requires skill and technique. Do not get fancy or you may pay the price.



- Make sure your ladder is at a safe angle and stabilized.
- The ladder should be positioned at no more or less than a 4-to-1 ratio.
- Use the three-point contact method when climbing or descending a ladder.
- Always climb and descend facing the ladder holding on to the rungs or steps as you climb (not the side rails).
- Climb one step at a time and don't climb or descend with tools or other materials in your hands.
- To maintain your balance, keep your belt buckle between the ladder's side rails—do not stretch or overextend yourself.