

TAILGATE TOPIC



TOPIC: Ladder Safety in Citrus and Olive Orchards (Straight Ladders)

OVERVIEW: The use of straight ladders in orchard operations results in numerous injuries every year. By following specific procedures for the care and use of this equipment, many incidents can be avoided.

TALKING POINTS:

- The proper height ladder should be chosen to complete the work. Employees should be able to reach to the top of the trees without climbing past the third rung from the top of the ladder.
- Before use, the ladder should be inspected thoroughly to ensure it is in good condition. You should check for broken, loose, cracked, or missing parts. This includes rivets and bolts. Rungs/steps should be in good condition and not worn smooth from use.
- Mud and debris should be cleaned from the rungs before use.
- Any ladders found to have defects or in poor condition should be reported to the supervisor/crew boss and then tagged and taken out of service.
- When setting the ladder, it needs to be properly positioned. The base should be placed to prevent it from kicking out once weight is put on the ladder.
- Before climbing, you should stand on the first step and wiggle the ladder to make sure it will not sink or settle unevenly causing it to tip.
- The ladder should be placed into the middle of the tree, not on outside branches.
- Always face the ladder when climbing up or down.
- Never jump from the ladder to get down.
- Do not over reach while on the ladder. Keep your body centered over the rungs. Move the ladder to get a better position to complete the task. Never step onto branches to gain a better reach.

- Never climb past the third rung from the top. If you cannot reach the fruit or complete the task, get a taller ladder.
- For citrus, clippers should stay attached to your hand or placed into a sheath. Never put clippers into your pockets.
- Do not over fill your picking bags, bins, or buckets. Make sure they are securely strapped to your body. Unexpected movement can cause you to fall.
- These ladders can be very tall and specific attention should be placed on the location of electric/power lines. A safe distance should be maintained from power lines, at least 10 feet.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. It is okay to jump down from a ladder as long as it is onto flat, smooth ground? True or False. (False)
2. If you find a problem with a ladder during your inspection, what should you do? (Report it to the Supervisor and take out of service.)
3. Name the steps in properly setting a ladder. (Set the base so it won't kick out, place the ladder into the center of the tree, and step up on the first step and wiggle the ladder to ensure the legs are solidly set.)
4. It is okay to reach out from the ladder as long as it is securely set and you have a good hold on the ladder? True or False. (False)
5. It is okay to use the top 2 rungs of the ladder? True or False. (False)
6. It is okay to face away from the ladder as long as you have a good hold on the side rails. True or False. (False)

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