

Ladder Safety

KEY POINTS

- Make sure the ladder is secure on solid ground.
- Do not use broken or defective ladders.
- Face the ladder and climb down slowly.
- Never jump from the ladder.
- Never climb past the third rung from the top of a ladder.
- If you can't reach on item, move the ladder rather than leaning to the side.
- Keep your trunk within the ladder's sides.
- Store ladders in a clean, dry place and inspect before use.

Ladders are the cause of many serious accidents on the farm each year. Both fixed and portable ladders are used extensively in many agricultural operations. The safe use of ladders is rather a simple matter, but is complicated by the fact that many workers don't take the time to use the ladder properly. It is a matter of taking a little extra time to do the job safely.

New ladders should be chosen for quality construction, and matched to the kinds of work for which they will be used. Farm workers should always choose a long enough ladder so they need not climb to the top two steps or three rungs. Only one person at a time is permitted on ladders designed for one-man operations.

Ladders should be placed on a firm footing so they do not sink in on one side, or slip out. If the ground is soft, the ladder should be placed on a sturdy wooden

slab large enough to give ample support. Portable straight and extension ladders must be placed at a four-to-one angle -- the base set one foot out for every four feet up. Watch out for electrical wires or connections.

Need to move a long, heavy ladder? Better to use two farm workers rather than risk an accident or back injury.

It should be noted that, in general use, portable metal ladders may be used in areas containing electrical circuits if proper safety measures are taken. Metal ladders, however, should not be used around or near power lines.

Care should be taken to store ladders in a clean, dry, out-of-the-way place, where they can't fall. Wooden ladders should be kept coated with a suitable protective material.

Ladders should be free from improvised repairs and from modifications to make them stronger. They should also be free of cracks, splinters, burrs, and bent rungs or frames. Ladders should be visually inspected before each use. Wooden ladders should only be covered with a clear preservative so that cracks or other faults can be seen.

REVIEW OF LADDER SAFETY

- The joints between ladder side rails and steps should be tight.
- Ladders should be sturdy and strong enough for their intended use.
- Ensure ladder has a load rating in excess of the user and any tools to be carried.

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- The top of the ladder used to gain access to a roof should have at least three feet of extension at the top of the landing.
- Non-self-supporting ladders should be erected on a sound base at a four-to-one pitch, and placed to prevent slipping.
- A portable ladder should be lashed or held in position by some means if it cannot be placed so as to prevent slipping.
- On two-section ladders, the height adjustment should be made only when the user is at the bottom of the ladder.
- The top of an ordinary step ladder should not be used as a step.
- Step ladders should be equipped with a metal spreader or locking device of sufficient size and strength to securely hold the front and back sections in an open position.

For further information or assistance, contact your Zenith Safety & Health consultant.