



Ladder Safety

Falls from portable ladders (step, straight, combination and extension) are one of the leading causes of occupational fatalities and injuries. Orlando Health Orlando Regional Medical Center is interested in preventing injury through education.

Many injuries can be avoided by observing the following tips.

Do:

- Read and follow all labels/markings on the ladder.
- Avoid electrical hazards! Keep ladder, body, tools and any materials at least 10 feet away from energized electrical conductors (or even further for higher voltages exceeding 50kv).
- Always inspect the ladder prior to using it. If the ladder is damaged, it must be removed from service and tagged until repaired or discarded.
- Make sure all four feet of a portable ladder are set on a level and stable surface and that both ladder spreaders are fully extended and locked into place before use.
- Use extension ladders only on a stable and level surface, unless it has been secured (top or bottom) to prevent displacement.
- Always maintain a three-point (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand) contact on the ladder when climbing. Keep your body near the middle of the step and always face the ladder while climbing.
- Only use ladders and appropriate accessories (ladder levelers, jacks or hooks) for their designed purposes.
- Ladders must be free of any slippery material on the rungs, steps or feet.

Do not:

- Use a ladder for purposes for which it was not designed.
- Use a metal ladder or any other conductive materials when performing any tasks or working in an area where you, your tools or materials, or the ladder could make contact with energized electrical conductors or equipment.
- Climb up or down a ladder while carrying any object that prevents you from firmly grasping the ladder with at least one hand or that can cause you to lose your balance.
- Exceed the maximum load rating of a ladder. Be aware of the ladder's load rating and of the weight it is supporting, including the weight of any tools or equipment.
- Place a ladder on boxes, barrels or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.
- Move or shift a ladder while a person or equipment is on the ladder.
- Use a self-supporting ladder (e.g., step ladder) as a single ladder or in a partially closed position.
- Use the top step/rung of a ladder as a step/rung unless it was designed for that purpose.
- Place any tools or materials on the top cap or any step of the ladder that might fall and strike someone if the ladder were to be bumped or inadvertently moved.

Remember:

- An extension or straight ladder used to access an elevated surface must extend at least three feet above the point of support. Do not stand on the three top rungs of a straight, single or extension ladder.
- The proper angle for setting up a ladder is to place its base a quarter of the working length of the ladder from the wall or other vertical surface.
- A ladder placed in any location where it can be displaced by other work activities must be secured to prevent displacement or a barricade must be erected to keep traffic away from the ladder.
- Be sure that all locks on an extension ladder are properly engaged.

