

SAFETY TALK

Choosing the Right Ladder

Ladders are valuable tools that can help making access to elevated work easier. However, they present some unique job hazards, especially if you choose the wrong type of ladder for the type of work that is being done. Ladders are almost always comprised of either wood, fiberglass, or metal (typically aluminum). The first factor that you should consider when choosing the right ladder is the work environment. For example, if you are working near electricity you should never use a metal ladder. If you are conducting electrical work, the type of electrical work being will dictate whether you use a conductive or nonconductive ladder. Unless isolated and performing barehand live line work, you need a nonconductive ladder. Similarly, there are ladders made specifically for other tasks as well. The factors determining your choice of ladder include, whether the ladder will be resting on an uneven surface, whether the work area will be crowded with people and/or materials, and if obstructions will exist in the path of the climb. It is not safe for you to use ladders that are too long or too short. You should never stand on the top rung or step of a ladder. Avoid using the top three rungs or steps of an extension ladder. You need to get a longer ladder, if you need to stand on the top few rungs or steps. Conversely,

using a straight ladder that is too long can be problematic as well.

DUTY RATINGS

200 lbs.	TYPE III Lightweight duty. Economical for lightweight projects.
225 lbs.	TYPE II Medium duty. For simple designs projects.
250 lbs.	TYPE I Heavy duty. Can handle most projects.
300 lbs.	TYPE IA Extra heavy duty. Pro use for rugged projects.
375 lbs.	TYPE IAA Extra heavy duty. Maximum durability for the toughest projects.

For example, if ceiling height prohibits the ladder from being set-up at the proper angle (4:1). You should never use an extension ladder that is too long and can't be extended more than 3 feet beyond the upper support point. The next factor that you should consider is the duty or weight rating of the ladder.

There are five categories of ladder duty ratings:

- Type IAA (Extra Heavy Duty) 375 pounds
- Type IA (Extra Heavy Duty) 300 pounds
- Type I (Heavy Duty) 250 pounds
- Type II (Medium Duty) 225 pounds
- Type III (Light Duty) 200 pound

You can find the weight capacity rating on the label of your ladder. Be sure to factor in the weight of any tools, objects or clothing into your choice as well. Finally, you should familiarize yourself with the different options so that you can make the right choice when selecting a ladder. They include stepladders, single ladders, articulated ladders, combination ladders, extension ladders, extension trestle ladders, job-made ladders, fixed ladders and mobile ladder stands and ladder stand platforms.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What three materials are ladders made of?

What typed of ladder should not be used when working near electricity?





MEETING / TRAINING

Attendance Roster

COMPANY: _____

_____ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: _____

_____ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: ___/___/___

TIME: _____

TOPICS ADDRESSED: _____

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: _____

ACTION TAKEN: _____

Supervisor's Signature

___/___/___
Date

Safety Coordinator's Signature

___/___/___
Date