

LADDER SAFETY

According to the National Safety Council's "2007 Injury Facts" falls are among the leaders in non-fatal, unintentional injuries that affect nearly 8 million people. Ladder safety falls into this category. A ladder is a common tool in general maintenance, therefore many people disregard the dangers it presents. If the proper safety precautions are not followed, a ladder can be extremely dangerous. Improper use of ladders is responsible for injuries as minor as a sprained ankle and as serious as paralysis or death.

The American Ladder Institute suggests the safest way to climb a ladder is to maintain 3 points of contact. This contact should be maintained during descent and ascent. The individual using the ladder should have either two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder at all times. This will give the user security in the event one point slips.

The following tips assist in minimizing the risk of a ladder fall:

- Allow only one person on a ladder at one time.
- Climb and descend a ladder utilizing each step. Do not attempt to skip over rungs to climb or descend quickly.
- Wear shoes with sufficient traction to avoid slipping.
- Keep the center of the stomach between the ladder side rails while climbing. Do not overreach or lean to either side as this may cause tipping.
- When possible, keep a spotter below the ladder for additional security, and to guide ground traffic away.

Check It Out!

Go to www.laddersafety.org for more information on ladder safety. Get tips on how to choose the right type of ladder and sign up for **free online ladder safety courses**.



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