



## Extension Ladder Safety

It is important to always focus on working safely, follow all company safety policies and safety rules, and ensure that you do not place yourself or others at risk of injury. To reduce the potential for accidents and injuries, you must first read and follow the extension ladder's manufacturer's operator's manual including all safety precautions, warnings, and safe use instructions.

### Training

Never use any extension ladder that you have not been formally trained on by your company supervisor or manager and all training should be documented. If you have any questions and/or concerns regarding the safe operation of the extension ladder, do not use the ladder and ask your supervisor for assistance.

### Preventative Maintenance and Inspections

All extension ladders should be visually inspected before use to ensure it is in safe working condition.

- Ladders should not have any damage, lack of structural integrity, missing components or loose parts.
- The steps or rungs must be tight and secure to the side rails. Rungs, rails, and other components should be free of dents, cracks, and corrosion. All hardware and fittings need to be properly and securely attached.
- Movable parts must be tested to see that they operate without binding or without too much free play.
- All labels should be intact and readable.
- Ladders shall be free of oil, grease, or slippery materials.
- A ladder that has been exposed to fire or strong chemicals should be discarded.
- All accessories such as leg levelers, paint shelves, stand-off shelves, etc. are in good condition
- The ladder base must have the slip resistant material.

While inspecting extensions ladders, make sure of the following:

- ✓ Ropes and pulleys are in good condition.
- ✓ Ladder extension locks move freely and lock correctly.
- ✓ Rung locks are on the rails of the top section to ensure the top section will not fall.
- ✓ Extension guide brackets are secure and in place.
- ✓ Do not use damaged or unsafe ladders. Damaged or worn ladders should be destroyed.

Each year, about 50 construction workers are killed by falls from ladders. The main cause is falling from an extension ladder. The falls are frequently caused by either the slippage, movement of the supports or by workers losing their balance.

### Tips to Prevent Falls from Extension Ladders

- Use your extension ladder in the manner that it is supposed to be used.
- Ensure that all required manufacturer specified labels (capacity/safety), are legible and available to all employees using the ladder.

### Tips (continued)

- Inspect the work area before attempting to set up the extension ladder. Identify any overhead hazards, such as electric power lines, steam lines or other hazards. Maintain minimum 10' clearance from any electrical lines and always assume the wires are energized. Never use an aluminum ladder near electrical lines or electrical hazards.
- Keep the area at the top and base of the ladder free of debris, clutter, equipment, and tools.
- Set the ladder at the correct 4 to 1 angle. For every four rungs, place the ladder back a foot. As a check, (with your feet on the feet of the ladder and your arms extended straight forward) you should just be touching a rung on the ladder.
- Make sure the ladder is sitting straight and secure before climbing it. Set up on a firm, solid surface. Do not allow ladders to lean sideways. Level them before using.
- Do not set up the ladder on visqueen, tarps, loose carpet or rugs, or on any surface that might cause the feet to slide or where feet could shift while in use.
- Screw a 2x4 cleat to the ground behind the ladder's feet to prevent the ladder from slipping backward. If ladder is set up on soil or dirt, drive a stake into ground to secure base of ladder. Do not create an impalement hazard and do not use unprotected rebar or pipe.
- Tie off and/or secure the top of the ladder to prevent it from slipping sideways.
- Extend the ladder three feet (36") above the landing area.
- Do not over-reach while working from ladders. Your bellybutton should always be inside the rails. Instead of overreaching, get down and move/reposition the ladder.
- Always maintain 3-points of contact. The three points of contact rule is simple — always maintain one hand and two feet, or two hands and one foot, when climbing or descending ladders, trucks and equipment.
- Before descending, look down to make sure the area around the base is clear.

To watch our brief ladder safety inspection and ladder safety use videos, visit [ffvmutual.com/safety/safety-videos/](https://ffvmutual.com/safety/safety-videos/).