

# Ladder Safety Hazard Alert

From 2018 to 2022, 3,351 U.S. workers died after falling from a height while at work.<sup>1</sup> Every year, more than 100 workers die after falling from a ladder, making up a significant portion of all fall-related deaths.<sup>2</sup> Many of these deaths are preventable with the appropriate safety measures.

1. Bureau of Labor Statistics [2023]. Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 2018–2022.  
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/newsroom/feature/ladder-safety.html>

## Please observe the following safety tips:

- Be sure to identify the right type of ladder for the work being done. Things to consider when identifying the right type of ladder include: work environment, ladder type, load capacity, material, height and reach, maneuverability, and condition of the ladder. To learn more about identifying the right type of ladder, visit OR-OSHA's ladder safety training.
- Before each use, inspect the ladder for any damage, including to the feet, pads, side rails, rungs, and spreader bars. If damages or defects are identified, remove the ladder from service and tag or mark the ladder with "Dangerous, Do Not Use" or properly dispose of the ladder.
- Check the ladder's load capacity rating to make sure that it can safely hold the weight of you and your equipment.
- Ensure that the ladder is placed on an even and solid surface and is properly secured. When using a ladder in a place where it could be bumped by other people, objects, or equipment, secure or close off the immediate surrounding area.
- Ladders being used to gain access to elevated levels, like a roof, should extend at least three feet past the highest point of support.
- The pitch of the ladder should follow the 4:1 ratio – for every 4 feet of elevation, the ladder should be 1 foot out from the base.
- When on the ladder, be sure to maintain three points of contact (two hands and a foot or two feet and a hand) at all times.
- When on the ladder, always make sure to face the ladder and try to keep your weight in the center. Do not lean to the sides while on the ladder.



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## Safety tips (continued)

- Never use the very top rung of a ladder.
- Only use a ladder for its intended purpose. Never use a ladder in the horizontal position as scaffolds, as work platforms, or a stepladder in its folded position as a straight/extension ladder.
- Never use metal ladders near electrical equipment, or when performing electrical work.

Safety tips sources: <https://www.cpwr.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/Ladders-Fact-Sheet.pdf>  
<https://www.cpwr.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Ladders-Hazard-Alert.pdf>

## Examples of Fatal Stories

**Case 1:** During his first day on the job, a 25-year-old laborer was up 6 feet on a ladder doing a demolition job when he had an unwitnessed fall to concrete below. He was found unconscious with a crushed skull and was transported to the hospital, where he was taken off life-support 18 days later.

**Case 2:** A 68-year-old art gallery owner fell from the eighth rung of a ladder, hitting her head on the ground. She was transported to the hospital, where she died later that day.

**Case 3:** A 28-year-old gutter installer was holding a section of a metal gutter while standing on a metal ladder. The end of the gutter made contact with overhead power lines resulting in electrocution and the gutter installer falling three stories to his death.

**Case 4:** A 28-year-old temporary construction laborer died of craniocerebral trauma after a fall to a lower level. The employee was on a five-foot tall mobile ladder stand removing brackets from an overhead raceway between print lines of a solar panel. Another employee heard a hard hat hit the cement floor and found the construction laborer on the floor. 911 was called and the employee was transported to the hospital where he was later pronounced dead.



**OR-OSHA Ladder Safety Training:**

