

DuPage County Environmental, Safety, Health & Property Loss Control Program
Fall Protection for Ladders and Scaffolds

Purpose: Ladders are commonly used and expose County workers to falls from raised levels and even electrical hazards. This procedure establishes common safety practices for working on ladders and scaffolds.

Policy: “Job made” ladders are not to be made or used by employees. Only ladders appropriate for the job and labeled by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) can be used.

General Requirements (Ladders):

- i. If an employee feels tired or dizzy, or are prone to losing their balance they must stay off ladders. Users who tire easily or who have physical limitations that inhibit safe climbing such as fainting and /or are under medication or prescription drugs which may cause physical impairment are not permitted to climb ladders.
- ii. Ladders or lifts should not be used outside in high winds or storms.
- iii. Ladders shall be inspected by each employee prior to each use for chips, cracks damaged or missing safety feet and other defects.
- iv. Ladder beams and rungs shall be kept clean and free of mud, grease or oil to prevent slips.
- v. Employees climbing ladders should wear slip-resistant shoes with heels. Shoes with leather soles are not appropriate for ladder use since they are not considered sufficiently slip-resistant. Flat soled shoes are not appropriate.
- vi. Only 1 person at a time is permitted on a single-cleat ladder unless specifically designed for more than 1 climber.
- vii. No more than 2 persons (1 on either side) are permitted on a Double-cleat ladder.
- viii. The areas at the top and bottom of each ladder shall be kept clear of rubbish, debris, and equipment.
- ix. Employees must maintain a three point contact with the ladder being climbed. This means that only one hand or foot is free of the ladder while it is being climbed. On straight ladders it is best to keep both hands on the beam, sliding them along the beam as one ascends or descends.
- x. Jumping or sliding down from a ladder or climbing more than one cleat at a time is not permitted.
- xi. Employees must not carry tools, equipment, or supplies by hand while climbing ladders. In order to maintain three point contact with the ladder, employees must use hoist lines to transport tools, equipment, and supplies up the ladders.

2) General Requirements (Ladders) Continued:

- i. Broken or damaged ladders must not be used. Repair or destroy them immediately. Ladders to be repaired must be tagged out and removed from the area. When disposing of an unserviceable ladder, insure that it is totally destroyed so that it cannot be used by anyone else.
- ii. Wooden ladders shall not be painted so as to obscure a defect in the wood, only a clear, non-conductive finish shall be used.
- iii. Portable metal ladders shall not be used in the vicinity of energized electrical circuits.
- iv. Ladders shall not be placed in front of doors opening toward the ladder or resting on an overhead door, unless the door is open, locked, power locked out or guarded to prevent operation.
- v. Only one person shall work from a ladder at any time. If two persons are required, a second ladder shall be used.
- vi. Ladders shall not be used as scaffold platforms.
- vii. Boxes, chairs, etc., shall not be used as ladders.
- viii. When ascending or descending ladders, employees shall have both hands free and shall face the ladder.
- ix. Unsecured ladders shall not be left unattended.
- x. The feet of ladders shall be placed on a solid base/surface. If necessary, use stable sills to prevent the ladder feet from sinking into soft soil.
- xi. All ladders should be equipped with suitable safety feet.
- xii. Ladders should not be used outside in ice or frost conditions.

Straight Ladders:

- i. All straight ladders must be tied off at the top or otherwise secured to prevent movement. A second employee must hold the bottom of the ladder while the top is being secured.
- ii. Ladders shall be erected so that the ladder side rails extend at least 36 inches above the landing surface.
- iii. Extension ladders shall be placed at an angle to the surface to be climbed such that the base of the ladder is no more or less than 1/4th the total working length of the ladder from the base of the surface to be climbed.
- iv. Ladders used for access to a floor, roof or platform must extend at least 36" above such locations.
- v. It is prohibited to splice together two shorter ladders to form a longer ladder.
- vi. Never use a ladder against a vertical pipe unless the ladder is equipped with a specially designed web strap.
- vii. Do not place the ladder against movable objects.
- viii. Straight ladders shall not be climbed beyond the third step from the top.
- ix. Ladders may not be used in the horizontal position as a walkway, work platform, etc.

Step Ladders:

- i. Metal step ladders shall not be used when working on electrical wiring/lamps or fixtures.
- ii. The top two steps shall not be used.
- iii. The legs shall be fully spread and the spreading bars locked firmly in place.
- iv. Cross bracing on the rear section of step ladders shall not be used for climbing unless ladders are designed and provided with steps for climbing on both sections.

Scaffolds: (General Requirements):

Only qualified management personnel can oversee the following aspects required for proper scaffolding; selection; erection; use, movement; alteration; dismantling; maintenance and inspection.

- i. Platform width shall be at least 18 inches.
- ii. Scaffolds shall not be loaded in excess of the working load.
- iii. Scaffolds shall be secured to permanent structures by using anchor bolts, reveal bolt or the equivalent.
- iv. Scaffold poles, legs or uprights shall be plumb and securely braced to prevent swaying and movement.
- v. Instable objects shall never be used to support scaffolds or scaffold planks.
- vi. When developing or re-evaluating a plan for scaffold use, refer to CFR29 1910.28b through (u) to determine if the scaffolding meets OSHA requirements.

Training:

General Requirements:

Each employee who will, in the course of their job duties, be trained in the safe use of Ladders, and Scaffolds by their Supervisor.

Refresher training shall be provided as needed for employees so that the employees maintain the understanding and knowledge acquired through compliance with the following:

- Be trained by a competent person
- The maximum intended load-carrying capacities of ladders and scaffolds used
- The standards contained in 29CFR 1926, 1050 through 1060, and 29 CFR 1910.30.