

Northwestern

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY & SECURITY
ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH & SAFETY

Portable Ladder Safe Work Practices

General Precautions

- ✓ Only use ladders and appropriate accessories (e.g., ladder levelers, jacks, or hooks) for their designed purposes.
- ✓ Do not place ladders on boxes, barrels, or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.
- ✓ Do not move or shift a ladder while a person or equipment is on the ladder.
- ✓ Use a ladder only on a stable and level surface, unless it has been secured (top or bottom) to prevent displacement.
- ✓ A ladder placed in any location where it can be displaced by other work activities must be secured to prevent displacement or a barricade must be erected to keep traffic away from the ladder.



- ✓ Always maintain 3-points of contact on the ladder when climbing (e.g., two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand).
- ✓ Keep your body near the middle of the step and always face the ladder while climbing.



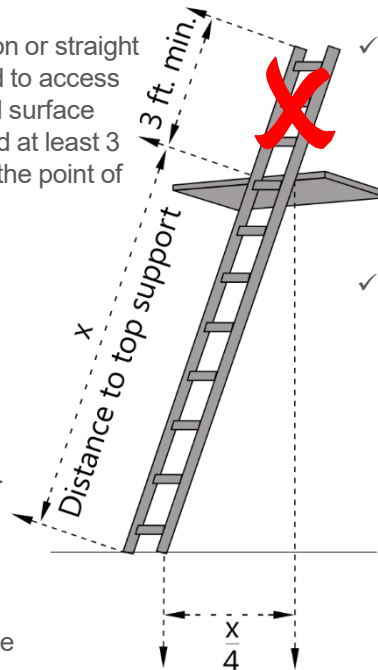
- ✓ Be sure that all spreaders and locks are properly engaged.

- ✓ Do not use a self-supporting ladder (e.g., step ladder) as a single ladder or in a partially closed position.



- ✓ Do not use the top step/rung of a ladder as a step unless it was designed for that purpose.

- ✓ An extension or straight ladder used to access an elevated surface must extend at least 3 feet above the point of support.



- ✓ Do not stand on the three top rungs of a straight, single, or extension ladder.

- ✓ The proper set-up angle for an extension or straight ladder is to place the ladder base 1/4 of the working length of the ladder from the wall or other vertical surface.

- ✓ Read and follow all labels/markings on the ladder.



- ✓ Do not exceed the maximum load rating of a ladder. Be aware of the ladder's load rating and of the weight it is supporting, including the weight of any tools or equipment.



- ✓ Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder.

- ✓ Do not use a metal ladder near power lines or exposed electrical equipment.



Learn more: Complete [Ladder Safety](#) training and review the [Portable Ladder Safety Spotlight on Safety](#) bulletin.

Questions?

Contact Environmental Health and Safety ehs@northwestern.edu.