

Checklist for Ladders and Stairways

Falls from ladders continue to be a serious hazard for construction workers. A poorly designed or maintained ladder, or an improperly used ladder, or a ladder that is not appropriate for a particular task, may collapse under the weight of the employee and his or her load. Employees who are not trained in the proper selection, use, and care of ladders may choose the wrong ladder for a job, or use a ladder improperly, or store the ladder improperly, increasing the risk of accidents. Nearly all falls from ladders are preventable, if employees are given safe and appropriate ladders and are trained how to choose, use, and care for them properly.

The below sample checklist for portable ladders and stairways is not all-inclusive and should be used as a means to monitor the ladder/stairway program at a worksite.

Ladders	Yes	No
Are ladders inspected prior to use?		
Are defective ladders withdrawn from service and tagged "Dangerous – Do Not Use" or rendered unusable?		
Is the area where the ladder will be used inspected for a firm base (free of water, ice, grease, mud, etc.) and free of overhead hazards, such as power lines?		
Are ladders secured from slipping?		
Do ladder side rails extend 3 feet above the upper landing surface if a grab rail is not available?		
Are portable rung and cleat ladders placed so that the horizontal distance from the top support to the feet is one quarter the working distance of the ladder (a ratio of 1 to 4)?		
Are extension ladders positioned prior to extending?		
Are barricades placed to protect ladders from displacement when used in a walkway?		
Is there an established policy that prohibits the use of an aluminum ladder when working near power lines?		
Is there an established policy that prohibits the use of ladders when working outdoors in strong windy conditions?		
Have employees been trained on the proper selection and use of ladders?		
Have employees been instructed to always face the ladder when ascending or descending?		
Have employees been instructed in the proper method of carrying and positioning ladders?		
Are employees allowed to carry materials as they ascend or descend ladders?		
Are employees prohibited from leaning out from the ladder?		
Are extension ladders left unattended?		
Are employees prohibited from using the top step, top cap and rear braces when using step ladders?		

Ladders	Yes	No
Is there an established maintenance program to keep ladders in good repair and in usable condition?		
Are ladders stored in dry areas away from heat, cold, and corrosives?		
Are ladders stored upright?		

Stairways	Yes	No
Is riser height and tread depth uniform?		
Are landings installed every 12 feet of vertical rise?		
Are landings a minimum 22 inches wide and minimum of 30 inches in the direction of travel?		
Is a platform installed where doors or gates open directly onto stairs?		
When a door is open, is the effective width of the platform a minimum of 20 inches?		
Are all parts of a stairway free of hazardous projections, such as protruding nails?		
Are slippery conditions (i.e. from snow or ice) eliminated prior to use?		
Are stairways having four or more risers, or rising more than 30 inches, provided with at least one handrail?		
Are unprotected sides and edges of stairways and landings provided with appropriate guardrails?		
Are stair-rails and handrails smooth surfaced and free of projection hazards?		

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