

TOOLBOX TALK #29

SAFELY WORKING AT HEIGHT

In 2023, 725 workers were killed after a fall to a lower level, according to Injury Facts – an online statistical database managed by the National Safety Council. Falls to a lower level, which includes ladder-related falls, is the third leading “fatal workplace event”.



Are you properly trained in ladder safety? Make ladder safety a focus at your next safety meeting. Remind workers that when they're selecting a ladder to use, they need to ask these questions:

- Will the ladder hold my weight?
- Is it in good condition?
- Is it tall enough for the job at hand?

Once the ladder is positioned:

- Is it fully opened and locked?
- Is it on a hard, flat non-movable surface?
- Does it lean against a secure, unmovable surface?
- Is it in front of a door?

NSC says to remind workers about the 4:1 ratio: a straight ladder or an extension ladder should be positioned one foot away from its support surface for every 4 feet of ladder height.

More tips:

- Windows and doors are not stable surfaces to lean a ladder on.
- Straight or extension ladders should be securely fastened to an upper support.
- Step ladders need to be completely opened before climbing.
- Don't climb higher than the third rung from the top.
- Maintain three points of contact (two feet and one hand or one foot and two hands) when climbing.
- Face the ladder as you climb.