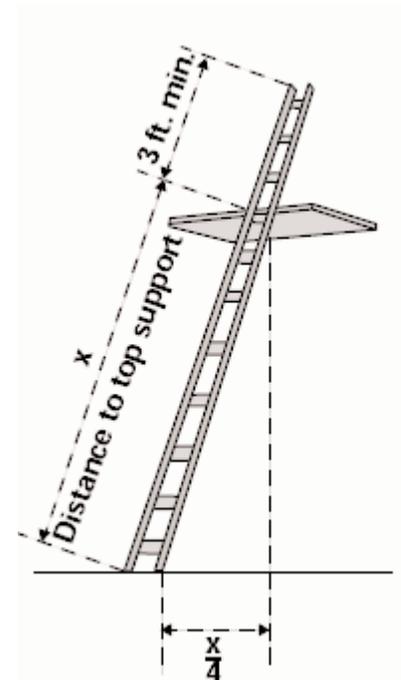




We have all worked with ladders at some time in our lives, either at work or at home. The following are some tips that may make your interaction with ladders less hazardous:

- Before using a ladder, inspect it for faults, such as broken rungs or rails. If it is an extension ladder, inspect the pulleys, ropes and locks for excessive wear. Also, check the footings and pads to make sure they still provide a non-skid surface. If any defect is found, the ladder should be tagged unsafe and taken out of service. If it cannot be fixed, make sure it is disposed of properly.
- When setting up a ladder, make sure the ground it is set upon is level and stable. Do not set the ladder up on a muddy surface or you may find yourself falling over. Do not use bricks or other material to raise the height of the ladder. If it is not tall enough, you are using the wrong ladder.
- The ladder should reach a minimum of three feet above the “point of support” and should be secured at this point.
- When using extension ladders, abide by the 1:4 rule. This means if you are using a 12 foot ladder, the base should be three feet from the structure. Some ladders provide a picture guide on the ladder itself to assist you in this. When using a stepladder, make sure the folding cross braces are locked in the proper position before you step onto it.
- Always face the ladder when ascending or descending, and have both hands free to grasp it securely. If you need tools, they should be carried in a tool belt or pulled up with a rope once you have reached your destination.
- Remember the “3-Point Rule”: At least two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand, should be in contact with the ladder at all times.
- Keep your body between the side rails of the ladder. This reduces the chance of tipping it over and/or falling off.
- Do not climb higher than the third rung from the top on straight or extension ladders or the second tread from the top on stepladders.
- Choose the right style of ladder for the job. Weight of the user, tools and materials should never exceed the rating of the ladder.
- Ladders should be inspected before each use for loose or damaged rungs, steps, rails, braces or non-slip feet.
- If damage is found that may affect safety, the ladder must be tagged immediately and removed from service.
- Wear shoes with non-slip soles.
- Place all ladder legs on solid, level ground or on a stable base.
- Climb facing the ladder with your body centered between the rails.
- Do not carry heavy or bulky items; use a bucket or rope or a tool belt.
- Do not work on ladders during a severe storm or strong wind.
- Protect the base from traffic. If a ladder must be placed in front of a door, make sure the door is locked or guarded.
- Never step over the top of a ladder.
- Never attempt to “walk”, “hop”, or “laterally” move a ladder while standing on it. Never overreach! Move it.



- Tie off the ladder once you have climbed to your working height.

There are specific tips for different styles of ladders. Be sure to follow the safety advice for the type of ladder you are using.

The following illustration shows the proper placement of straight or extension ladders. The ladder's feet are 1/4 the working length of the ladder away from the upright surface to be climbed.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - The information and suggestions presented by Michigan Millers Mutual Insurance Company in this Safety Talks Toolkit Bulletin are for your consideration in your loss prevention efforts. They are not intended to be complete or definitive in identifying all hazards associated with your business, preventing workplace accidents, or complying with any safety related, or other, laws or regulations. You are encouraged to alter them to fit the specific hazards of your business and to have your legal counsel review all of your plans and company policies.