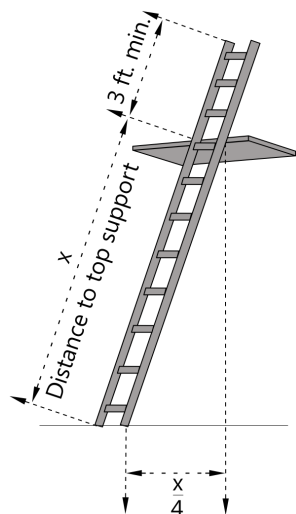


June 2025

THE SAFETY FACTOR

Always follow the "OSHA Safety Factor of 4" when setting up a ladder. For every 4 feet up the ladder goes, it must be 1 foot out from the wall. OSHA also requires all ladders extend at least 3 feet from the support point.



Wondering if your ladder is safely positioned? Download the **free NIOSH Ladder Safety App** and check right from your phone!



Ladder Safety Guidelines

Before Beginning Work:

- Assess the area for potential hazards, such as overhead power lines.
- Based on the job, determine the correct height and type of ladder needed.
- Ensure your ladder meets the appropriate load capacity.
 - Load capacity must be greater than the weight of employee plus the weight of their tools, materials, and equipment.

Pre-Use Ladder Inspection:

- Inspect the ladder prior to use for the items below. If any items are observed, or if the ladder has been recalled for any reason, the ladder must be tagged out and removed from service until repaired or replaced.
 - Wooden parts
 - Structural damage
 - Split or bent side rails
 - Broken or missing rungs
 - Bent or malfunctioning locking mechanisms
 - Missing or loose hardware, rivets or bolts
 - Grease, oil, paint, or other slippery material that could pose a slip hazard on the ladder's rungs
 - Missing or damaged labels/markings

Ladder Set-Up and Work Area:

- Place ladder on a stable and level surface that is not slippery.
- Fully open A-frame ladder and lock spreaders.
- Extension ladders are to be placed at a 4-to-1 ratio.
 - The base of the ladder should be 1 ft. away from the wall for every 4 ft. of height.
- Extension ladders must extend 3 ft. above the landing's surface.
- Barricade the area around the ladder if work will take place in a high traffic area, in front of a door, or where it can be disturbed.

Using a Ladder – Do's:

- Maintain 3-points of contact when climbing or descending a ladder.
 - 3-points means two hands and a foot, or one hand and two feet
- Face the ladder while climbing or descending.
- Stand on the ladder with both feet while working.
- Have a second person steady the ladder base if an extension ladder is 20 or more ft. tall. The ladder must be tied off to a sound anchor point at the top or bottom if a second person is not present to hold it.

Using a Ladder – Do Not's:

- Use a damaged, bent, or broken ladder
- Stand on the top cap or end cap
- Reach too far forward or sideways beyond the side rails
- Use a metal ladder near electrical lines or sources
- Move or shift the ladder while a person or equipment is on it
- Use a ladder horizontally like a platform
- Climb the rungs on the rear of a single-sided A-frame ladder

If you have any questions regarding ladder safety or another safety topic, please contact the [Environmental Health and Safety Office](#) at 704-687-1111.