

Cal Poly

Code of Safe Practice

Ladders

These following general rules shall be followed and these precautions shall be taken when it is necessary to use any type of ladders:

Ladder Safety Procedures

A secure, well made ladder is necessary for safe ladder use. Ladders come in different styles, including step, straight, and extension. They also vary in construction and may consist of wood, aluminum, or fiberglass. Choose the correct type and size ladder for the job. All ladders sold within the U.S. are rated as follows:

- Type IA: Heavy-duty industrial ladder rated to hold up to 300 pounds.
- Type II: Medium-duty commercial ladder rated to hold up to 225 pounds.
- Type III: Light-duty household ladder rated to hold up to 200 pounds.

General Rules:

- When it is necessary to climb, do not substitute boxes, crates, barrels, drums, cans, chairs, furniture, plumbing fixtures, etc., for a ladder.
- Check ladders for defects before each use.
- Ladders with broken or missing rungs and/or steps, split side rails, or broken, loose, or missing safety feet/safety shoes shall not be used. The defective ladder shall be tagged "Out of Service" and shall be broken up before being placed in the dumpster. Under no circumstances will a defective ladder be removed from the premises for personal use.
- All ladders shall have approved safety feet or safety shoes.
- Never paint ladders, because paint can conceal defects. If ladders are to be protected from the weather, they can be coated with linseed oil or varnish or any other transparent non-conducting material.
- If two people are required to work on one ladder, a two-person ladder shall be used.
- When ascending or descending ladders, employees shall face the ladder and grip the sides or rungs with at least one hand when the ladder is less than ten feet tall.
- When an employee is working on a straight ladder or extension ladder, twenty feet or more in length, another employee shall hold the lower end of the ladder or it shall be lashed securely.
- Use a ladder of the correct length. Ladders shall be placed so the distance from the foot of the ladder to the base of the wall or other support is approximately one-fourth the working length of the ladder.
- When transferring or stepping from a ladder to an elevated position or landing (such as from ladder to rooftop,) the ladder side rails must extend a minimum of 36 inches above the landing. Never climb using the top three rungs.
- Only fiberglass ladders shall be used near energized equipment or electrical wiring.
- If a ladder is to be placed where the opening of a door can misplace it, the door shall be locked, closed or otherwise secured.

- Straight ladders or extension ladders shall not be used as scaffold platforms unless specifically designed for that purpose.
- When both hands need to be free while working on a straight ladder, the employee shall belt off to the ladder.
- Make sure hands and shoes are free of slippery materials like oil and mud before climbing any ladder.
- While working from a straight or extension ladder, keep your body within the side rails and avoid over-reaching by moving the ladder frequently.
- When carrying straight ladders, keep the front end high enough to clear anyone ahead of you.
- While working from straight or extension ladders, use a line to raise and lower tools and supplies. Never climb ladder unless both hands are free to hold the ladder.
- Never attempt to splice two ladders together.
- Stepladders—Platform Ladders:
 - Stepladders shall not be used as straight ladders.
 - Stepladder legs shall be fully spread and the spreaders locked open.
 - While an employee is working on a stepladder (except a safety platform ladder) at a point ten feet or more above ground or floor, the ladder shall be tied, blocked, secured or held in place by another employee to prevent its being displaced.
 - Never climb or stand on the two top steps (platform ladders excepted.) Most industrial ladders carry this warning on the step surface.
 - When leaving any ladder, especially a platform ladder, be sure to remove all tools and materials from it.
- Carry ladders horizontally with the front end slightly higher than the back end.
 - To open an extension ladder, brace the bottom end and push the rungs or rails out.
- Place ladders on a solid, level surface to ensure safety:
 - Watch for overhead obstructions and power lines.
 - To prevent ladders from sinking into soft ground, use a large board under the feet of the ladder.
 - Position a straight or extension ladder so that the base of the ladder is one foot away from the vertical support for every four feet of working ladder height (e.g., if you are working with eight feet of ladder, place the base of the ladder two feet from the wall.)
 - Do not place the top of a ladder against a window or an uneven surface.
- When possible, tie the top of a straight or extension ladder to supports. Stake and tie the feet of the ladder.