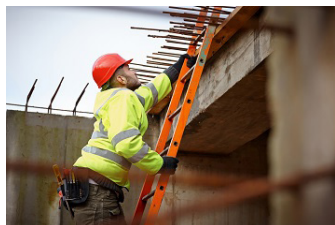


# FACT SHEET: Portable Ladders

## Safe Use and Handling



Portable ladders are commonly used tools that allow employees to safely and efficiently complete tasks above ground level. If ladders are not properly maintained or used incorrectly, serious injury and even death can result. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that approximately 150 worker fatalities and 20,000 non-fatal injuries occur each year in the United States.

### NEED TO KNOW:

1. **ALWAYS** inspect ladders **before** each use.
2. Remove damaged/defective ladders from service.
3. Face forward when climbing or descending a ladder.
4. **ALWAYS** maintain three points of contact and avoid leaning out beyond the side rails.
5. Review and follow manufacturer's guidelines on the ladder's labels.

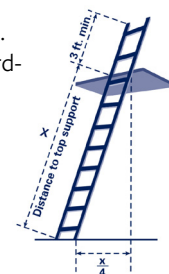
### SELECTION

- Choose the right ladder based on your weight plus the weight of all tools, materials, and equipment.
- Fiberglass ladders are recommended because they are more durable than wooden ladders and significantly less conductive than aluminum ladders.
- **Medium and Light Duty ladders are not allowed at Tulane facilities.**



### INSPECTION

- Check rungs, steps, rails, spreaders, and cleats for damage or defects.
- Confirm bolts, rivets, spreader locks, rung locks, ropes, and other hardware are secure and working properly.
- Ensure feet have slip-resistant pads in good condition.
- Ensure labels and stickers are in good condition and legible.
- Remove unsafe ladders from service immediately. Identify with "Danger - Do Not Use" tag, and notify supervisor/manager.



### SET UP

- Always set up ladders on a firm and level surface capable of supporting the anticipated load.
- **NEVER** lean a ladder against unstable surfaces.
- Ensure spreaders are fully extended and locked.
- Ensure shoes are dry and free of grease or dirt to prevent slips.
- Place base of ladder one foot away from vertical for every four feet of height, measured from the ground to the ladders upper resting point.

### SAFE LADDER USE:

- **ALWAYS** face the ladder while climbing or descending.
- **NEVER** attempt to move or adjust a ladder when someone is on it.
- Don't carry tools or equipment when climbing a ladder, use a tool belt or have a coworker hand the tool up to you.
- **NEVER** stand or sit on the top 2 steps of a ladder.
- When using an extension ladder to access a roof, ensure the ladder extends at least 36" over the top of the parapet
- **DO NOT** lean out beyond a ladder's side rails or carry items in your hands when climbing a ladder.
- **ALWAYS** maintain 3 points of contact when climbing or descending a ladder (2 hands and 1 foot or 2 feet and 1 hand).

### MORE INFO:



### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- OSHA Standard 1910.23: [Ladders](#)
- OSHA: [Stairways and Ladders: A Guide to OSHA Rules](#)
- OSHA: [Portable Ladder Safety Quick Card](#)
- CDC/NIOSH: [Falls in the Workplace: Ladder Safety Mobile App](#)