

## Hazard Alert - Ladders

Using ladders can be risky, but not if you do it right:

Here are a few of the main points.

- Ladders are not work platforms. They are a means of access. In situations where you can use a scaffold or other type of approved work platform, use it. You may only work from a ladder when it is not possible to use a proper work platform.
- If working from a ladder is your only option, remember that ladders are more hazardous than work platforms. Fall protection rules apply to ladder use. If your feet are more than three metres from the ground, you must use fall protection.
- Some provinces (e.g. Ontario) will allow "short duration" work from ladders-less than 30 minutes. Therefore, a worker may not work from a ladder for more than 30 minutes at one time. Workers may work from a ladder multiple times throughout the day, as long as there is an adequate rest period or alternative work in between. The amount of rest required depends on the task and the worker's physical condition. This differs slightly from an earlier interpretation of the rule in Ontario, which was that the 30-minute maximum applied to the entire day.

Don't forget: if you are doing short duration work from a ladder and your feet are more than three metres from the ground, you must use fall protection.

- You must keep your centre of gravity between the sides of the ladder and have two feet on the rungs at all times while working.
- Carrying equipment or material up or down a ladder is not permitted. Inspectors will look for 3-point contact.
- Ladders must be set up at proper angles, which is one foot out for every three to four feet up.
- Ladders must be set up on firm, level surfaces and the area around the base must be free of material and debris.

For a complete chapter from the Construction Health and Safety Manual on ladder safety, go to: [http://www.csao.org/UploadFiles/Safety\\_Manual/Equipment/Ladders.pdf](http://www.csao.org/UploadFiles/Safety_Manual/Equipment/Ladders.pdf)

For a safety talk on ladders, go to:

[http://www.csao.org/UploadFiles/Safety\\_Talks/Extension\\_Ladders.pdf](http://www.csao.org/UploadFiles/Safety_Talks/Extension_Ladders.pdf)

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