

Safety Talk: Ladders Last



PRESENTED BY:

MEETING START TIME:

DATE OF MEETING:

MEETING END TIME:

Background/Importance

- Falls are the leading cause of fatalities on construction sites, and every year, a third of falls are from ladders.
- While ladders have been common tools on construction sites in the past, they should be used as a last resort due to the risks associated with their use.
- In recent years, the availability of safer alternatives and techniques has reduced the need for ladders on jobsites.
- Planning work often includes prefabricating items at lower levels to reduce the amount of work from heights.

Hazards and Common Issues

- **Falls:** Falling from ladders is a primary source of injuries and fatalities among construction workers. The resulting injuries are often serious enough to require time away from work, which can make it difficult to manage the injury costs.
- **Overreaching:** Failing to maintain three points of contact while trying to ascend and descend a ladder can lead to loss of balance and falls.
- **Improper Setup and Use:** Improper ladder setup and usage, especially with portable ladders, can lead to equipment failure and kickouts.

Safety Controls

Eliminating ladder use can reduce some of the risks in the construction process altogether. More productive and safer alternatives can exist.

- **Aerial Lifts:** Offer a more secure platform with guardrails and, in many cases, are better suited for overhead work. These also allow for quick movement with less time required for a safe setup.
- **Mobile Platforms:** Offer stable and safe work surfaces that can quickly be moved to the location of the work.

When Ladders Are Necessary: If ladders must be used as a last resort, consider a podium ladder as the next best option. If a conventional ladder is the only viable alternative, make sure you follow safety practices, which can include the following:

- **Conducting Pre-Shift Inspections Before Every Shift:** Check for defects before each use and ensure ladders are in good condition and properly maintained.
- **Confirming Proper Setup:** Set the ladder at the correct angle (one-quarter of the ladder's working length away from the wall) and ensure the top of the ladder extends three feet above the landing surface.
- **Ensuring Safe Setup and Use:** Maintain three points of contact while climbing. Avoid leaning or overreaching. Keep the area around the ladder clear of obstacles.

Worker Comments / Feedback:

To be signed by all employees, contract workers, clients and others who participated in the safety talk prior to commencing work.

Signatures:

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