

# Ladder and Step Stool Safety

Falls from ladders and step stools are more common than you might think, and even though in some cases those falls occur from levels that are not that far above the ground, they can still cause serious injuries and lost time from work.

Since there are times when you may have to use a ladder or step stool to do your job, whether it's reaching, placing something on a high shelf or hanging a picture high on a wall, you need to be cautious and ensure the ladder or step stool you are using is sturdy and in good condition.

When using a ladder or step stool you should not over reach or put yourself in a position where you will be off balance. Also, you should make sure that you can safely handle the weight, size and shape of whatever it is you are removing or placing on a shelf or wall. If necessary, ask a coworker for help by having them stand on the ground and support the weight of the object being lifted into place or removed; this should enable you to not have to lift the object the full distance.

Listed below are some "safety tips" for using ladders and step stools. Keep these in mind and follow them each and every time you use a ladder or step stool, and you will lessen your chance of being injured.

## Safety Tips



- Do not stand on the top two steps of a folding ladder or step stool. If you need to go higher to perform your work, use a taller ladder.
- Make sure that all four legs of the ladder or step stool are on even footing and that the spreader is fully opened.
- Don't use a step ladder as a straight ladder; the legs are not designed for this and, thereby, the base can kick out and injure you.
- Make sure the ladder or step stool is latched in the best position to perform the work. If you must reach out or bend excessively, stop and reposition the ladder or step stool.
- Inspect the ladder or step stool for damage regularly. Cracked steps and uprights or loose or missing parts can result in total collapse of the ladder or step stool.