



Stepladders are handy. They're portable, self-supporting, and help you get to work areas and work spaces that would otherwise be beyond your reach. But stepladders also put you at risk of falls and electrocution. Here's how you can stay safe when you're working from a stepladder.

### **Inspect the ladder before you use it. It should be free from damage, including:**

- Structural damage, such as broken, bent, loose, or missing parts;
- Contaminants, such as dirt or grease, that could lead to a slip and fall;
- Stickers or tape (other than required warning stickers) that could cover up a defect or damage;  
*and*
- Opaque coatings that could cover up damage or defects or be slippery.

If you find any problem or defect in a ladder, do not use it. Tag it with "Do not use," and get another ladder.

### **Set the ladder up safely. You don't want it to tip while you're on it.**

- Set up the ladder on a stable, level surface.
  - Avoid slippery, uneven surfaces.
  - Avoid boxes, barrels, stacked pallets, or other unstable surfaces.
  - Avoid high-traffic locations, or secure the area around the ladder with barricades.
- Open the ladder fully, and lock the spreaders in place.
- Look out for overhead power lines, and stay clear.
- Do not use a stepladder as a straight ladder, a scaffold, or a scaffold support.
- Do not use a stepladder to access an upper landing surface (for example, a roof).

### **Work safely from the ladder. Here are some important do's and don'ts.**

#### **DO:**

- Always maintain three points of contact with the ladder (two hands and a foot or two feet and a hand).
- Face the ladder while climbing up or down.
- Use a tool belt or other system for raising and lowering tools and work materials.
- Check the rated capacity of the ladder.

#### **DON'T:**

- Carry items up or down the ladder by hand.
- Overload the ladder.
- Stand on the top step or top cap of the ladder.
- Climb the cross bracing on the rear of the stepladder.
- Lean outside the side rails to perform work.
- Move or shift a ladder while workers or materials are on the ladder.

