

Portable Ladder Safety Tips

Portable ladders are regularly used by many of us, both at home and at work. Often times we grab and use a portable ladder without much thought as to how safe the ladder is. Portable ladders are easy to take for granted, since they are basic by design and don't appear to present much of a danger. However, if used improperly or not examined for safety, they can cause serious injury or even death. That is why it is important to stop and think before you start to use a portable ladder.

You should always take time to plan when preparing to use a portable ladder. While planning out your task, make it a point to verify that you have the right ladder for the job and that the ladder is in good condition. Using the wrong portable ladder to perform a task can be just as dangerous as using a defective one. Make it a habit to follow these basic tips before using a portable ladder:

- Read and follow all labels and markings on the ladder.
- Do not exceed the maximum load rating of a ladder. Be aware of the weight the ladder is supporting, including the weight of any tools or equipment.
- Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder. Avoid using metal ladders near power lines.
- Always inspect the ladder for damage before use. If damaged, remove from service and tag until repaired or discarded.
- Make sure the ladder is free of any slippery materials on rungs, steps or feet.
- Make sure the surface that the ladder will be placed on is stable and level. Do not place a ladder on boxes, barrels or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.
- Do not attempt to use a portable ladder in a manner it was not designed, such as leaning a step ladder in its closed position against a surface to climb.

It should be routine to always check your portable ladder for potential hazards before each use. Make sure it is sturdy, with no loose or broken parts and that it is locked in place before using it. Remember that portable ladders are helpful in completing everyday tasks, as long as we take the time to examine and use them safely.

References:

OSHA Quick Card 3246-10N-05, Portable Ladder Safety

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