

Safety Sheet 2 – Ladders and Stepladders

Consult the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations for detailed information.

1. All ladders must be properly suited for the task.
2. All ladders must be in good working condition. Check all parts before each use.
3. All ladders must be CSA (or equivalent) approved, especially for construction purposes.
4. It is recommended to use a heavy duty or grade 1 ladder.
5. Ensure to verify the rating load and respect limitations.
6. All ladders must have non-slip feet.
7. All ladders must be on a firm footing and secure against slipping.
8. Avoid twisting or turning.
9. Do not stand on the top two rungs.
10. Face the ladder, use both hands to climb up or down, and maintain three-point contact at all times. To keep your hand free, use a tool belt, or hoist tools and materials up after you reach the top.
11. Do not overreach; keep your centre of gravity between the side rails. A general rule is that if your buckle is in line with the uprights you are leaning too far.
12. Never paint or coat a wooden ladder with an opaque material.
13. Never use aluminium ladders, or conductive materials, where electrical contact is possible.
14. Ensure areas surrounding the base and top of the ladder are clear of obstructions.
15. Never use a ladder horizontally.
16. If work is conducted at more than 3 metres with a hazard of falling, workers must have proper training, wear a safety harness and tie the lanyard to the structure, or to a lifeline, before beginning work.
17. Ensure you are wearing slip-resistant footwear.

Additional requirements if using an extension ladder:

18. Follow the 4 to 1 rule. Ladders should be inclined so there is one rung length out from the wall for every four rungs height to the point the ladder touches the wall (not less than 1/4 and no greater than 1/3).
19. The top of the ladder should extend at least one metre above the edge of the working surface.
20. Have someone hold the bottom of a tall ladder until it can be tied off to a firm anchoring point.
21. Do not use in high winds.
22. An extension ladder which exceeds 6 metres in length must be held in place while in use by one or more workers if it is not securely fastened or is likely to be endangered by traffic.
23. Never erect ladders near power lines unless you are a competent electrician and follow restricted rules.

Additional requirements if using a stepladder:

24. Ensure to lock the stepladder in place by spreading the legs to their limit and locking the spreader.
25. Never stand on the top or use the pail shelf as a step.
26. Verify the age of the ladder (should be imprinted into the ladder).
27. Maintain 3 points of contact with the ladder.

More information: [Infrastructure Health and Safety Association](#)