

Toolbox Talk: Ladder Safety

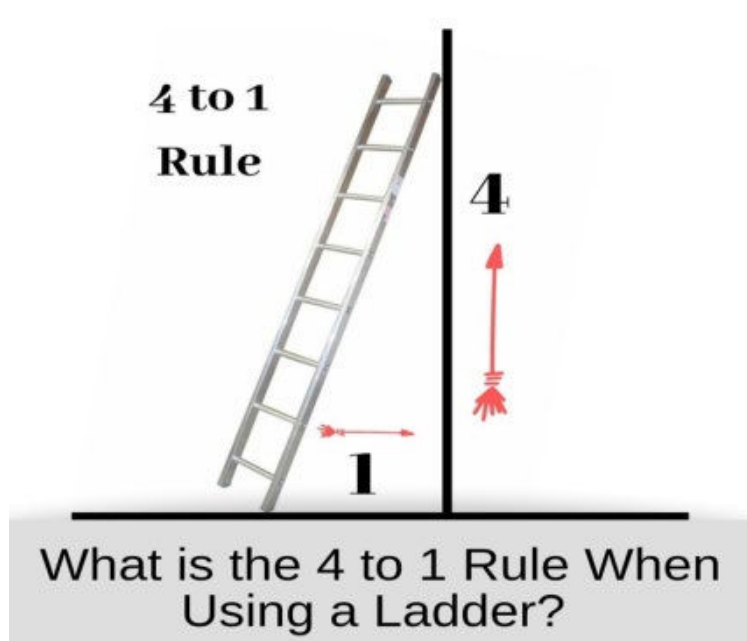
Introduction

Ladders are a common tool both at work and at home, but they can present serious hazards if not used correctly. By adhering to safety guidelines, you can significantly reduce the risk of accidents and injuries while using ladders.

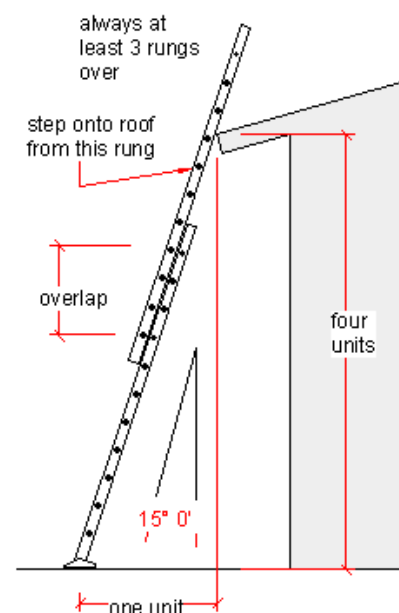
Ladder Inspection

Before using any ladder, perform a thorough inspection:

- Check for Faults: Look for broken rungs, damaged rails, or other visible defects. For extension ladders, inspect pulleys, ropes, and locks for wear and tear.
- Inspect Footings: Ensure that footings and pads are intact and provide a non-skid surface.
- Tag and Remove: If defects are found, tag the ladder as unsafe and remove it from service. If it cannot be repaired, dispose of it properly.



Diagr.1



Diagr.2

Setting Up a Ladder

Proper setup is crucial for stability:

- Level Ground: Place the ladder on a level, stable surface. Avoid setting it up on muddy or uneven ground.
-

- **Avoid Improvised Supports:** Do not use bricks or other materials to elevate the ladder. If additional height is needed, select a ladder of the appropriate length.
- **Height Requirements:** Ensure that the ladder extends at least three feet above the support point and secure it at this point.
- **1:4 Rule for Extension Ladders:** For every 4 feet of ladder height, position the base 1 foot away from the structure. Many ladders have a guide to help with this measurement.

Using the Ladder

Follow these practices to maintain safety while using the ladder:

- **Face the Ladder:** Always face the ladder when climbing up or down and keep both hands free to hold onto it.
- **Use a Tool Belt:** Carry tools in a tool belt or pull them up with a rope once you've reached your working position.
- **3-Point Rule:** At least two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand, should be in contact with-the ladder at all-times.
- **Stay Within Rails:** Keep your body centered between the ladder's side rails to prevent tipping or falling.
- **Avoid Overreaching:** Do not climb higher than the third rung from the top on straight or extension ladders, or the second tread from the top on stepladders.

OSHA: Portable Ladder Safety

https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/portable_ladder_qc.pdf

OSHA: Reducing Falls in Construction: Safe Use of Extension Ladders

<https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3660.pdf>

Oregon OSHA: Portable Ladder Safety

<https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHAPubs/3083.pdf>

Summary

Proper ladder safety practices are essential for preventing accidents and injuries. By inspecting ladders before use, setting them up correctly, and following safe climbing techniques, you can greatly reduce the risk of falls and other ladder-related incidents. Remember, adhering to these guidelines helps ensure your safety and protect your well-being.

