

# LADDER SAFETY

Falls from ladders are one of the leading causes of injuries to workers. Proper use of ladders is critical to preventing serious injuries or fatalities. Always ensure that you are using the right ladder for the right job, and that you have been trained in safe ladder use.

The ladders described in this document include:

- Extension ladders
- Portable straight ladders
- Step ladders

## HAZARDS:

- Falls from ladders
- Struck by falling ladders or materials falling from ladders
- Tripping over ladders (erect or lying on floor)
- Lifting heavy ladders
- Striking persons or objects when carrying ladders
- Contact with electrical equipment

## LADDER OVERVIEW:

- Use only CSA or ANSI Standard Grade 1 or 2 ladders, or job-built ladders built to WorkSafeBC Standard LDR 1-2004. Manufactured ladders must have legible CSA or ANSI labels
- Always ensure that your ladder and work practices comply with BC Occupational Health and Safety Regulations

## FALL PROTECTION:

Fall protection is not required when performing "light duty tasks" e.g., inspection or painting, provided the ladder is set up with its base at the same physical location only for sporadic, short-term work. If work on a ladder is likely to exceed 15 minutes at one physical location, fall protection should be used. Do not position a ladder near an edge, a drop in height, or a floor opening that could significantly increase the potential fall distance.

## PRE-SET-UP:

- Ensure ladders have a visible label indicating their rating

- Inspect area for debris and slippery surfaces
- Ladders and associated components must be inspected before use and after any modification. Remedy any unsafe conditions before using the ladder
- Ensure that surface is level and suitable for erecting the ladder
- Ensure that ladder has proper footing and is in good working order
- Ensure the ladder is the adequate height for the work be carried out
- Ensure the area where the ladder is to be set up will not significantly increase the potential fall distance, such as near the edge of a roof, or on an elevated surface
- Ensure the area where the ladder is to be set up is clear of any electrical hazards

## **PROCEDURES:**

### **Portable Step Ladders**

- Fully open the stepladder on a level surface and lock both spreaders in place
- Do not place a step ladder on other objects such as boxes, lifts or scaffolding to gain additional height
- Do not use a stepladder folded up and leaning against a surface (as a straight ladder)
- Do not use the top two steps of a ladder
- Mount the ladder from the front, climb and work with your body near the middle of the steps
- Always face the ladder when ascending and descending
- Do not stand or climb on the rear braces of the ladder

### **Extension/Portable Straight Ladders**

- Use the lanyard to extend the ladder to the desired height, and tie-off the lanyard to a rung on the bottom section (base) of the ladder
- Ensure dogs/hooks on the extension ladder are engaged
- On slippery surfaces, secure the ladder with rope, sandbags, floor cleats etc. to prevent slipping
- The upper section (fly) of the ladder should have a non-slip surface in contact with the object it rests against
- All portable ladders should be strong enough to support any expected load
- Never overreach or lean to one side while using a ladder. Keep your centre of gravity between the side rails
- Inspect the ladder before and after use. Check design and materials for uniformity and spacing of steps. The rungs, cleats or steps must always be parallel and even
- The steps should be spaced evenly and not more than 12 inches apart

- Use a three-point contact climbing and working method (e.g.: 1 hand and 2 feet)
- Ladders used to access a rooftop or elevated surface must extend 1 meter (3 ft) past the surface and be secured in place
- Tag and remove defective or damaged ladders for repair
- Do not place a ladder in front of a door unless the door is blocked, locked, or guarded
- Keep rungs free of slippery materials such as oil, grease, and water
- Do not carry heavy or bulky objects, or any other objects, which may make ascent or descent unsafe
- Ensure that the ladder base is minimally one foot from its supporting surface for every four feet in height that the ladder extends (1:4 ratio)
- Do not use a ladder to access mobile elevating work platforms unless permitted by the manufacturer of the lift
- If work cannot be done safely from a ladder, other means must be used

### **PROPER MAINTENANCE OF PORTABLE LADDERS:**

- All bearings, locks, wheels, and pulleys should be lubricated frequently
- Ensure that all hardware and fittings are securely attached
- Ensure movable parts operate without catching or wobbling
- Ensure the joints between steps and the side rails are tight
- Remove any ladders with broken or faulty equipment that cannot be repaired

### **POST PROCEDURE/TAKE DOWN**

- Inspect ladder before returning to storage. Ensure all ladders are returned in good working order
- Do not leave ladders in an upright position for storage unless they are secured against movement