

Ladders

Additional Resources:

- [OSHA QuickCard™](#)
- [Complete OSHA Standard](#)

Portable and fixed ladders with structural defects - such as broken or missing rungs, cleats or steps, broken or split rails, or corroded components shall be withdrawn from service by immediately tagging "DO NOT USE" or marking in a manner that identifies them as defective, or shall be blocked, such as with a plywood attachment that spans several rungs. Repairs must restore ladder to its original design criteria. 1926.1053(b)(16) through (18)

Portable non-self-supporting ladders shall be placed on a substantial base, have clear access at top and bottom, and be placed at an angle so the horizontal distance from the top support to the foot of the ladder is approximately one-quarter the working length of the ladder. Portable ladders used for access to an upper landing surface must extend a minimum of 3 feet above the landing surface, or where not practical, be provided with grab rails and be secured against while in use. 1926.1053(b)(1) and (b)(5)(i)

Ladders must have nonconductive siderails if they are used where the worker or the ladder could contact energized electrical conductors or equipment. 1926.1053(b)(12)

The top or top step of a stepladder shall not be used as a step. 1926.1053(b)(13)

Job-made ladders shall be constructed for their intended use. Cleats shall be uniformly spaced not less than 10 inches apart, nor more than 14" apart. 1926.1053(a)(3)(i)

A ladder (or stairway) must be provided at all points of access where there is a break in elevation of 19" or more except if a suitable ramp, runway, embankment, or personnel hoist is provided to give safe access to all elevations. 1926.1051(a)

Ladders shall be used only for the purpose for which they were designed. 1926.1053(b)(4)

Wood job-made ladders with spliced side rails must be used at an angle where the horizontal distance is one-eighth the working length of the ladder.

Fixed ladders must be used at a pitch no greater than 90 degrees from the horizontal, measured from the back side of the ladder.

Ladders must be used only on stable and level surfaces unless secured to prevent accidental movement.

Ladders must not be used on slippery surfaces unless secured or provided with slip-resistant feet to prevent accidental movement. Slip-resistant feet must not be used as a substitute for the car in placing, lashing, or holding a ladder upon a slippery surface. 1926.1053(b)(4) through (b)(7)

Employers must provide a training program for each employee which enables each employee to recognize hazards related to ladders and stairways and to use proper procedures to minimize these hazards.

For example, training must include:

- The nature of fall hazards in the work area· The correct procedures for erecting , maintaining, and disassembling the fall protection systems to be used;
- The proper construction, use, placement, and care in handling of all stairways and ladders
- The maximum intended load-carrying capacities of ladders used.

In addition, retraining must be provided for each employee, as necessary, so that the employee maintains the understanding and knowledge acquired through compliance with the standard. 1926.1060(a) and (b)