

gbca SAFETY TOOLBOX TALKS



Straight Fixed and Extension Ladders

Straight fixed ladders and extension ladders are two of the most commonly used ladders in construction, and they are often used incorrectly, leading to serious injury. Extension ladders are leaned against a fixed point, such as a wall, roof line or platform. They can have specialized attachments for poles as well as bridging for stability.

Always Check the Following Before Using a Ladder:

- Be sure there are no electrical hazards where you will be using the ladder before you set up. If there is, STOP and get your supervisor.
- Check the ladder's label and rating to be sure that the ladder is rated for what you need.
- Inspect the ladder for defects. Do not use defective ladders. Alert your supervisor immediately, (tag as defective) or remove from the site.
- Do not set up a ladder in doorways, behind doors, or in areas where traffic (walking or otherwise) can hit the ladder.

Correct Use Requires the Correct Angle:

- The right pitch for a fixed or extension ladder is 75.5 degrees from the wall or surface.
- The 4-1 Rule: For every 4 feet up, the ladder's base should be 1 foot out from the wall.
- The Standing Test: Stand and place your toes against the erected ladder's rails. While standing straight up, extend your arms straight out. The palms of your hands should touch the top of the rung at shoulder level.

Now that the ladder is up what else should we do to be sure it's safe to use?

- Be sure the base is secured and does not move.
- Secure the top of the ladder.
- The ladder rails MUST extend at least 3 feet above the intended exit point.
- Be sure the rungs, as well as the bottoms of your shoes, are not slippery.
- Always face the ladder when ascending or descending and use 3 points of contact.
- Center yourself (belt buckle to the center of the ladder).
- NEVER carry tools or equipment up a ladder. Use a line or safety bucket.