



# SAFETY ALERT — Please Post

## Ladder Safety for Painters: Prep Before You Step

From 2011 through 2012, four house painters died at work in Massachusetts. All four fell to their deaths from ladders. As with most work-related fatalities, these could have been prevented.



### Plan ahead...

#### Choose the right ladder for the job.

Choose a ladder that can support you and your tools and check the ladder's duty rating label. A self-supporting step ladder, straight ladder, or extension ladder may be what you need to get the task done safely. If the task cannot be done safely from a ladder, use scaffolding or a lift.

#### Ensure your ladder is in good working condition.

*A self-employed Massachusetts painter fell 14 feet from an extension ladder while painting the exterior of a house. The ladder was found to be damaged in several places: it had bent rungs and side rails and damaged feet.*

- Ladders should be inspected for damage before each use.
- Check for cracked, loose, or slippery rungs, split side rails, or worn shoes.
- Make sure the rung locks are in working order.
- If ladders have any defects, they should be immediately removed from service and marked defective or tagged with "Do not use" so others know not to use them.

### At the worksite...

#### Set up the ladder correctly—it's essential.

*A Massachusetts painter scraping paint on the exterior of a house fell 18 feet when his ladder slipped out from under him. The ladder was not tied off or secured and was footed on composite decking.*

- The base should be set on dry, level ground or other secure, even surface.
- To avoid slip-out, the ladder must be set at a proper angle of one foot out for every four feet of ladder height, and the base and top of the ladder should be secured. See "Resources" on back of sheet for ways to secure your ladder.
- When using an extension ladder to access an upper level, the ladder should extend three feet above the roof edge.

#### Use the ladder properly.

*A Massachusetts painter was preparing to paint the inside surface of a gutter at a home. He climbed the unsecured extension ladder holding a 2.5 gallon bucket of paint and fell from the ladder to the ground.*

- Use a tool belt or hoist to transport your materials up the ladder and secure your paint to the ladder to keep a hand free to hold on.
- Face the ladder and maintain three-point contact with the ladder while climbing and while painting.
- Overreaching to the side or leaning away from the ladder to paint overhangs can lead to falls.
- Keep your belt buckle centered between the ladder side rails at all times.
- Climb off and reposition the ladder as needed.
- Do not work from the top three rungs of an extension ladder or from the top or top step of a step ladder.

Resources on back →



**FACE Facts | MA FACE** MA FACE (Massachusetts Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation) seeks to prevent work fatalities by identifying and investigating these incidents and developing prevention strategies for those who can intervene in the workplace. MA FACE is supported by cooperative agreement # 5U60OH008490 from CDC-NIOSH. This document may be copied freely and found online at [www.mass.gov/dph/FACE](http://www.mass.gov/dph/FACE). If you have comments or questions, call the MA FACE Project at 1-800-338-5223.



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# Free Fall Prevention Materials

## Fall Prevention for Construction Workers

Brochures and reports by MA FACE

[www.mass.gov/dph/FACE](http://www.mass.gov/dph/FACE) > Educational materials



## Portable Ladder Safety

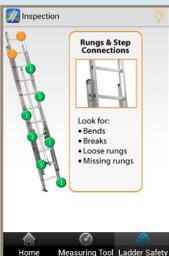
OSHA Quick Card

[www.osha.gov/Publications/portable\\_ladder\\_qc.html](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/portable_ladder_qc.html)

## Falling Off Ladders Can Kill: Use Them Safely

OSHA booklet

[www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3625.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3625.pdf)



## NIOSH Ladder Safety Smartphone App (iPhone, Android)

A guide for ladder selection, inspection, positioning, accessorizing, and safe use; measures ladder angle. Available from the App Store and Google Play.

[www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-06-17-13.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-06-17-13.html)

## Additional Resources

### National Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction

The Campaign is a joint effort by CPWR (The Center for Construction Research and Training), NIOSH, OSHA, state government, private industry, trade associations, academia, professional and labor organizations to address the top cause of construction industry fatalities: falls. The campaign's goal is to prevent fatal falls from roofs, ladders, and scaffolds by encouraging construction contractors to:

- **PLAN** ahead to get the job done safely.
- **PROVIDE** the right equipment.
- **TRAIN** everyone to use the equipment safely.

Find additional resources and more about the Campaign:

[stopconstructionfalls.com](http://stopconstructionfalls.com) | [www.osha.gov/stopfalls](http://www.osha.gov/stopfalls) | [www.cdc.gov/niosh/construction/stopfalls.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/construction/stopfalls.html)

### OSHA regulation 29 CFR 1926.1053

Ladder use for construction activities, including painting

### American Ladder Institute

Training materials from this national trade association which publishes the ANSI standards for ladders

[www.laddersafety.org](http://www.laddersafety.org)

### Lead Paint Safety

Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards, Lead Program

[www.mass.gov/lwd/labor-standards/lead-program](http://www.mass.gov/lwd/labor-standards/lead-program)



**Safety Pays  
Falls Cost**