Am I in danger?

If you use a ladder on a construction site, then the answer is YES.

Falls are the leading cause of deaths and injuries in the construction industry.
- Each year, more than 4,000 construction workers are injured so seriously by ladder falls that they miss work.
- Each year, about 70 construction workers DIE in falls from ladders.

Electrocution Hazard

Falls aren't the only way to get hurt on a ladder!

Contact with overhead power lines is a common, and sometimes fatal, source of injury for those working with ladders. Make sure your ladder is positioned at least 10 feet from power lines.

Aluminum is an excellent conductor of electricity. Working around wiring? Fiberglass is a better choice.

To avoid a fall …

1 Inspect the ladder before every use

Inspect the rails, rungs, feet, and spreaders or rung locks of your ladder for defects or damage every time you use it. If you see any damage, tag it “do not use” and request another ladder in proper working order. And check your ladder’s duty rating — certain ladders may not support you and your toolbelt!

2 Position your ladder properly

For all ladders:
- Make sure you have level, solid footing for your ladder.
- Position the ladder near your work to avoid overreaching.

For extension ladders:
- Set the base one foot away from the building for every four feet of height.
- Tie off the ladder at the top — and bottom where possible!

3 Use the ladder safely

- Maintain three-point contact with the ladder at all times.
- Do not stand on the top two rungs of a stepladder, or the top four rungs of an extension ladder.
- Have your partner hold the ladder to steady it as you ascend.
- Don’t carry tools and materials while climbing. Use a rope to haul or hoist materials to the upper level!

Is a ladder the right tool for the job?

For work at heights, consider using a scaffold or aerial lift. The wider work platform and guard rails can substantially reduce your risk of falls.

If you think you are in danger:
- Contact your supervisor.
- Contact your union.
- Call OSHA 1-800-321-OSHA

Find out more about construction hazards.

Get more of these Hazard Alert cards — and cards on other topics.

Call 301-578-8500

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