



Weekly Safety Tip

The Month of March is
Ladder Safety Month

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In 2023, 725 workers were killed after a fall to a lower level.

Falls to a lower level, which includes ladder-related falls, is the third leading "fatal workplace event."

Since March is [Ladder Safety Month](#), make *ladder safety* the focus in a safety meeting.

Remind workers that when they're selecting a ladder to use, they need to ask these questions:

- Will the ladder hold my weight?
- Is it in good condition?
- Is it tall enough for the job at hand?

Once the ladder is positioned:

- Is it fully opened and locked?
- Is it on a hard, flat non-movable surface?
- Does it lean against a secure, unmovable surface?
- Is it in front of a door?

Remind workers about the 4-to-1 ratio:

A straight or extension ladder should be positioned 1 foot away from its support surface for every 4 feet of ladder height.

More tips:

- Windows and doors aren't stable surfaces to lean a ladder on.
- Straight or extension ladders should be securely fastened to an upper support.
- Step ladders need to be completely open before climbing.
- Don't climb higher than the third rung from the top.
- Maintain 3-points of contact (two feet and one hand or one foot and two hands) when climbing.
- Face the ladder as you climb.

David A. Varwig, CSP-retired and Vice-Chairman of the Safety Council of Northwest Ohio

Weekly Safety Share



Fixed Ladder Mandate Reminder

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SAFETY & HEALTH SHARE

MARCH is LADDER SAFETY MONTH

Since 2018, all new **permanent fixed ladders (24ft or greater)*** must be equipped with a [Ladder Safety System](#), per OSHA 1910.28.

If your ladders were installed before November 2018, your organization has **until 2036** to remain compliant with the legal mandate.

For California only:

This mandate includes permanent ladders that are 20ft or greater, per CAL/OSHA, not just 24 and more



Occupational Safety and Health Administration

OSHA regulations for permanent fixed ladders ([1910.28](#), [1910.29](#)) require fall protection for ladders extending over 24 feet, mandating personal fall arrest or ladder safety systems for new installations **since November 19, 2018**.

Existing cages are permitted until 2036, but must be replaced by systems thereafter.

Rungs must be at least 16 inches wide, spaced 10-14 inches apart, and support 250 lbs.

Key OSHA Requirements for Fixed Ladders

- **Fall Protection (Over 24 Feet):** New ladders (post-Nov 19, 2018) require a *ladder safety system* or *personal fall arrest system*.
- **Existing Ladders:** Cages/wells on older ladders are acceptable, but all must upgrade to fall arrest systems by **November 18, 2036**.
- **Clearance:** A minimum of 7 inches of clearance must exist behind the ladder rungs for foot & body.
- **Landing Platforms:** If a ladder extends over 50 feet, landing platforms must be installed every 50 feet.
- **Ladder Extensions:** Side rails must extend 42 inches above the landing surface.
- **Design and Maintenance:** Rungs must be 16 inches wide (minimum), uniformly spaced 10–14 inches apart, and kept free of slippery materials (grease/oil).

Safety Considerations

- **Training:** Employees must be trained on using personal fall arrest systems.
- **Inspection:** Fixed ladders must be inspected annually and visually checked before each use.
- **Gate Usage:** Self-closing swing gates are required at the top of ladders to prevent falls.

DAV for SCNWO



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