



## SAFETY TOOLBOX TRAINING –LADDER SAFETY: “GRAVITY ALWAYS WINS”

### SUPERVISOR INSTRUCTIONS:

- Use toolbox trainings to spark safety discussions during monthly meetings with employees
- Submit the employee sign-in sheet to your designated administrative assistant /training coordinator as a record of training

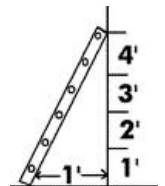
Gravity never forgets. As soon as you set foot on the ladder’s first rung and pull your body off the ground, gravity works to bring you back to earth. Therefore, it’s no surprise that ladder safety begins from the ground up.

### *Start with a good foundation!*

Proper ladder setup will help prevent slips and falls. Place the base on a firm, solid surface. Avoid slippery, wet, or soft surfaces. If you must put the ladder on a soft surface, place a board under the ladder’s feet to provide firm footing. Make sure the top of the ladder has firm support as well.



Never lean a ladder against a window pane or other unstable surface. If you’re using a straight or extension ladder, the angle of the ladder is the next critical safety factor. A straight or extension ladder should be placed 1 foot away from the surface it rests against for every 4 feet of ladder height. For example, if the ladder is 4 feet high, the bottom of the ladder should be 1 foot away from the support surface.



If you use a ladder to access a roof or platform, make sure the ladder extends at least 3 feet over the roof or platform edge. Be sure to securely fasten straight and extension ladders to the upper support. If you have angled the ladder properly and still have doubts about its stability, have someone hold the ladder before climbing up.

If you’re using a stepladder, be sure to open it completely before you climb. If you have to use a stepladder near a doorway, lock or barricade the door and post signs so no one will open it and knock you off the ladder.

### *Climb with care!*

Never climb with equipment in your hands. Use your pockets, equipment belt, or a tool pouch and raise heavy objects with a hand line. If you forget something, always climb down the ladder to retrieve it yourself - don’t have someone toss it up to you. Never ask someone to climb up a ladder while you are on it to give you supplies, unless the ladder is designed for 2 people because it is dangerous to exceed the weight limits that a specific ladder can handle. When you descend from a ladder, practice the same safety rules. Face the ladder, keep your body square and hold on to the rungs. Lastly, step off at the bottom rung of the ladder. Never jump off a ladder.



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### *Think before you carry!*



Evaluate your surroundings prior to hauling a ladder around. Ladders can be heavy and unwieldy which could cause you to strike another person, object, or hit electrical power lines. Make the ladder as compact as possible before transporting it. Carry it horizontally while tilting it higher in front and lower in back. If the ladder is particularly long and heavy, get a coworker to help you carry it.

### *Follow the rules!*

Ladder safety may seem simple, but injuries occur every year. Below are some ladder safety dos and don'ts:

- ✓ Use the correct ladder for the job.
- ✓ Inspect the ladder before and after a job.
- ✓ Read and heed all warning labels before you climb.
- ✓ Clean the ladder after each use to prevent dirt buildup.
- ✓ Wear clean, dry, slip-resistant shoes and use ladders with slip resistant feet.
- ✓ Don't stand any higher than the third rung from the top of the ladder.
- ✓ Don't lean too far or overreach. Reposition the ladder closer to the work instead.
- ✓ Don't use a ladder as a bridge or scaffold.
- ✓ Don't put a ladder on a box, barrel or other object to gain additional height.
- ✓ Don't use a damaged or unsafe ladder.

Experts also warn about ladder use in bad weather. Descend immediately if high winds, rain, or other inclement weather begins. Wind force can blow you off the ladder. Rain can make the rungs and the ground slippery. Bitter cold can make metal ladders more brittle and can cause other structural damage. If you encounter bad weather while on a ladder, do not speed up to finish the job and risk injury. Wait to finish the job until conditions are once again safe.

Remember; don't let gravity get you down. Practice ladder safety rules every time you climb to make your work easier, faster and safer. At Emory, anyone who uses a ladder needs Ladder Safety training. For more information, contact Tiffany Dothard at 404-727-3417 or [tiffany.dothard@emory.edu](mailto:tiffany.dothard@emory.edu).



**REMEMBER: HINDSIGHT EXPLAINS THE INJURY THAT FORESIGHT  
WOULD HAVE PREVENTED**



## Questions for Discussion:

1. **True or False:** A straight or extension ladder should be placed 1 foot away from the surface it rests against for every 4 feet of ladder height.

**Correct Answer:** *True*

2. **True or False:** If you use a ladder to access a roof or platform, it's okay if the ladder doesn't extend beyond the edge of the roof.

**Correct Answer:** *False. If you use a ladder to access a roof or platform, the ladder must extend at least 3 feet over the roof or platform edge to ensure safe climbing and prevent falls.*

3. **True or False:** Never climb a ladder with equipment in your hands. Use your pockets, equipment belt, or a tool pouch and raise heavy objects with a hand line.

**Correct Answer:** *True*

