



TOOL BOX TALKS

SUPERVISOR INSTRUCTIONS:

- Use toolbox trainings to encourage safety/environmental discussions during monthly meetings with employees.
- Campus Services' employees should maintain the employee sign-in sheet in their department's safety/environmental compliance binder as a record of training. All other groups should maintain a record of training in accordance with their Division's training procedures.

March is Ladder Safety Month – Be a Ladder Safety Pro! While ladders are inexpensive and useful ways to access elevated areas, they can also be very dangerous or even fatal, if used improperly. According to a NIOSH study, ladder falls are involved in approximately 20% of all occupational fall injuries! **Don't be a statistic! – Follow these steps to be a Ladder Safety Pro...**



Credit: Grainger

Use Ladders Properly

- Never use a ladder if you are feeling sick or dizzy.
- Visually inspect portable ladders at the time of purchase, before each use and following any incident (i.e. dropped ladders, employee accidents involving a ladder, etc.). Document inspections annually and following any incident.
- Select the correct type of ladder for the job. Consider the duty rating, ladder type and height required to safely complete your job task.
- Place stepladders, stepstools and mobile ladder stands on level surfaces. Ensure all safety feet fully supported.
- Block open, lock or otherwise guard doorways that open towards a ladder.
- Always face the ladder when ascending or descending, except as permitted by certain mobile ladder stands.
- To maintain balance, do not climb higher than the second step from the top cap on a stepladder or the fourth rung from the top of a straight ladder. However, the platform is the highest standing level on stepstools, platform stepladders and mobile ladder stands.
- Position a straight or extension ladder using the four-to-one rule. For every four feet in height, move the base of the ladder one foot away from the wall.
- Do not use the rear horizontal or bracing attached to the rear rails of stepladders or platform ladders for climbing or standing. These are designed solely for increasing stability.
- Keep the center of your body within the side rails of the ladder and maintain three points of contact while ascending or descending a ladder.
- Ensure the spreader assembly of a stepladder is fully opened and locked before use. Never climb a folded stepladder.
- When accessing an upper landing surface, such as a roof, ensure the side rails of non-self-supporting ladders extend at least three (3) feet above the upper landing, eave or edge.
- Never use a portable ladder in excess of its intended working load (i.e. duty rating).
- Never attempt to move, shift or extend a ladder while standing or climbing on it. Set-up ladders close to the work area and do not over-reach.

SAFETY/ENVIRONMENTAL TOOLBOX TALKS – LADDER SAFETY

- Never place a ladder on boxes, barrels, or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.
- Never use a metal ladder when working on electrical equipment or components.
- Remove damaged ladders from service and tag as “Dangerous, Do Not Use”, or with other similar language, until the repairs are made. Note: Ladders that cannot be repaired must be withdrawn from service and destroyed in such a manner as to render it useless.

Climb with Care

To meet OSHA's requirement to ensure ladders are inspected regularly and are maintained in a safe condition, Emory departments that own portable ladders are required to document portable ladders annually – including but not limited to all styles of stepladders, straight/extension ladders, mobile ladder stands and stepstools. A record of the annual inspection may be maintained electronically, on a ladder inspection tag affixed to the ladder, or on a printed form that is kept in a file or binder. The current and previous year's inspection should be made available upon request.

When performing ladder inspections, consider the following:

- The duty rating, safety and instructional labeling is present and readable.
- All hardware connections are secure and in good condition (i.e. no corrosion, etc.).
- Surfaces are free of sharp edges, splinters and burrs.
- Side rails and bracing are free of dents or bends.
- Steps, handrails and guardrails are not excessively dented.
- The spreader assembly of stepladders and platform ladders is intact, not bent and locks correctly.
- The safety feet and other components (such as casters, guardrails, etc.) of mobile ladder stands are present and in good condition.
- Steps and platforms are free of oil, grease or other slippery substances.
- The side rails, rungs or cleats of wooden ladders are free from shake, wane, compression failures, decay, or other irregularities.
- Pulley, rung locks, and rope on extension ladders are in good condition.
- No modifications have been made to the ladder without written approval from the manufacturer.

Questions for Discussion

1. **True or False:** It is ok to stand on the top cap of a stepladder.

Correct Answer: *False. To maintain balance, do not climb higher than the second step from the top cap on a stepladder.*

2. **True or False:** Portable ladder inspections must be performed annually.

Correct Answer: *True. Emory University's Ladder Safety Program requires that portable ladder inspections be performed and documented annually.*

3. **True or False:** Selecting the right ladder for the job is a good first step to ladder safety.

Correct Answer: *True. Select the correct type of ladder for the job. Consider the duty rating, ladder type and height required to safely complete your job task.*