

Theatre Safety

Ladders – Fixed and Portable

A fixed ladder is permanently attached to a structure, building, or equipment. A fixed ladder is utilized to access the catwalk. Portable ladders come in many shapes and forms. Portable ladder types include standard stepladders, two-way stepladders, platform stepladders, orchard ladders, trestle ladders, extension ladders, articulating ladders, rolling steel ladders, and telescoping ladders.

Improper use of ladders can result in serious injuries; however, following basic safety rules can greatly reduce the risk of fall incidents.

Fixed Ladders

Guidelines

1. Never use unprotected fixed ladders over 20 feet in length.
2. Remove all loose items from your pockets.
3. Maintain three points of contact with the ladder when climbing; two hands and one foot or one hand and both feet.

Portable Ladders

Maintenance/Condition

1. Inspect any ladder prior to use. Check for loose steps and rungs, cracked or split steps or side rails, loose or bent hinges, and missing ladder feet.
2. Never use a defective ladder. Mark defective ladder as “DEFECTIVE” and remove it from service. Advise your instructor/supervisor of the ladder’s condition.
3. Only complete ladder repairs as directed and specified by the manufacturer. Never make unauthorized repairs.
4. Check to ensure the OSHA required ladder information labels are in place.
5. Make sure the ladder is free of oil, grease, or other hazards.
6. Use only fiberglass or wood ladders when doing electrical work.

Guidelines and Safe Use

1. Check the ladder label to ensure the ladder is rated to support the combined weight of your body and the tools/materials you will be carrying.
2. Make sure stepladders are securely spread open. Never use a folding stepladder in an unfolded position.



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3. Use ladders on stable and level surfaces only. Exception: articulating ladders are designed for use on multiple levels.
4. Ensure ladders are stable prior to mounting the ladder.
5. Always face the ladder when ascending or descending, and use three points of contact at all times.
6. Never stand on the top two steps of the ladder.
7. Keep your body within the rails of the ladder.
8. Never reach too far above or to the side of a ladder, as this may cause you to lose your balance. Move the ladder as needed to reach the desired work area.
9. Use a hand line, lift, or hoist to raise and lower heavy and/or awkward loads. Never carry in your hands while climbing a ladder.
10. Never stand, walk, or work under a ladder while it is in use.
11. Secure stored ladders with ropes or chains to prevent them from falling.

Safe Use of Extension Ladders

1. Position extension ladders so the base to height ratio is 1 to 4 or 75 degrees. For example, the base of a 12-foot extension ladder is 3 feet away from the wall.
2. Ensure straight and extension ladders extend at least 3 feet beyond the landing surface.
3. Secure extension ladders at both the top and the base to prevent the ladders from moving from the points of rest. If this is not possible, have someone stand at the base of the ladder and secure it against slipping.

Safe Use of Trestle and Articulating Ladders

1. Assemble and use a trestle and/or extension trestle ladder in compliance with the manufacturer's use guide.
2. Obtain the manufacturer's written permission and direction prior to modifying a ladder.
3. Ensure the extension section of an extension trestle ladder never exceeds the base section length.
4. Position and secure the ladder in compliance with the manufacturer's instructions, especially if it is equipped with manufacturer wheels.
5. Ensure the ladder is stable prior to mounting it.