

# You Can Prevent Ladder Accidents

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are available in Spanish at [gemplers.com](http://gemplers.com).

## Key Points:

- Carefully inspect your ladder before each use.
- Never climb a broken or damaged ladder.
- Use the right ladder for the job.

**Note to trainer:** Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.

## Why ladder accidents happen

- Ladders are pretty uncomplicated pieces of equipment.
- Yet each year, thousands of people are injured — and some are killed — when they fall from ladders, both on and off the job.
- Serious injuries and deaths also occur when people use metal ladders too close to electric power lines.
- Most ladder accidents can be prevented. They are typically caused by:
  - using the wrong type of ladder for the job
  - failing to inspect a ladder before use
  - using a ladder incorrectly



## Before you use a ladder

- Be sure the ladder is the proper height. And be sure it can handle the amount of weight it will need to handle for the job.
- If you are uncertain about a ladder's height or weight capacity, ask your supervisor.
- Check to see what the ladder is made out of. Never use a metal ladder near overhead power lines.
- Closely inspect the ladder. Look for:
  - loose, missing or damaged steps or rungs
  - oily or otherwise slippery steps or rungs
  - loose nails, screws or bolts
  - broken or missing braces
  - damaged hinge spreaders
  - dents in metal ladders
  - cracks, splinters or evidence of rot in wooden ladders
  - worn nonslip bases
  - missing safety feet
- Ask your supervisor for a different ladder if you spot any problems.



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See our full line of safety supplies, including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

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## Setting up a ladder

- Set up a ladder only on a firm, level, nonslip surface.
- If you are resting a ladder against a wall, position it so it's parallel with the wall.
- The base of the ladder should be one foot away from the wall for every four feet of wall height.
- Be sure the ladder extends at least three feet beyond the top of the wall.
- Fully open all folding ladders and make sure locking devices are in place.
- Don't set up a ladder in front of a door.



## Safely using a ladder

- Ask someone to hold the bottom of your ladder before you climb it.
- Check your shoes. Make sure they have clean, dry, nonskid soles.
- Check for dangling shoelaces or pants legs that extend below your shoes.
- Use two hands when climbing a ladder. Keep at least one hand and both feet on the ladder while you are working.
- Mount the ladder from the center. And stay centered on the ladder while you're working.
- Don't carry hand tools or other items up a ladder. See your supervisor if you need help getting the items up.
- Stay off of the top two steps of a ladder.
- Don't reach too far while you are on a ladder, and don't try to move the ladder.
- Never allow more than one person on a ladder.
- Don't store anything on a ladder.



## Are there any questions?

Take time to answer trainees' questions.  
Then review the Ladder Safety Do's and Don'ts.

### LADDER SAFETY DO'S AND DON'TS

#### DO:

- Be sure the bottom of the ladder is secure before you climb it.
- Use a wooden or fiberglass ladder near power lines — not a metal ladder.
- Avoid reaching too far when you are on a ladder.

#### DON'T:

- Use boxes, a chair or anything else in place of a ladder.
- Walk under a ladder when someone is on it.
- Climb a ladder if you feel dizzy, ill or are afraid of heights.

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