



## **1.0 Scope and Application**

This policy is intended to prescribe rules and establish minimum requirements for the care, and use of the common types of ladders, in order to insure safety under normal conditions of usage. This policy applies to use of all ladders and scaffolds. Construction type activities that require scaffolding shall comply with the requirements of 29 CFR Part 1926.450 to 19126.454 as promulgated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). This policy complies with Chapter 32 (Public Employee Safety and Health) of the Wisconsin Administrative code as promulgated by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce.

## **2.0 Responsibilities**

Risk Manager: Support and management of this policy.  
Department Heads: Implementation of policy.  
Supervisors: Ensure policy is adhered to by all employees.  
Employees: Follow requirements contained in this policy.

All employees are responsible for complying with the requirements contained in this policy. Failure to abide by these requirements may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

## **3.0 Departmental Polices and Requirements**

This policy represents minimum ladder and scaffold safety requirements. Department Heads may develop specific departmental procedures to address specific ladder and scaffold use activities in their respective departments.

## **4.0 Definitions**

None.

## **5.0 Training**

All employees will receive instruction in this policy at their time of assignment and whenever this policy is revised.

## **6.0 Documentation Requirements**

None.



## 7.0 General Ladder Requirements

1. All ladders shall be OSHA approved and bear a label indicating the type of ladder:
  - Type I - Industrial stepladder, 3 to 20 feet for heavy duty, such as utilities, contractors, and industrial use.
  - Type II - Commercial stepladder, 3 to 12 feet for medium duty, such as painters, offices, and light industrial use.
  - Type III - Household stepladder, 3 to 6 feet for light duty, such as light household use.
2. Metal ladders shall not be used when working around electrical circuits, wires, changing light bulbs, etc.
3. Never stand on or above the second step from the top of a step ladder or the third rung from the top of a straight ladder.
4. Ladders should not be painted and must have approved non-skid feet. Clean muddy or slippery shoes before climbing.
5. Always check the weight rating of the ladder to be sure the ladder can safely carry your weight plus any load you are carrying. Type II commercial grade ladders are recommended rather than household Type III ladders.
6. No more than one person should be on a ladder at a time unless the ladder is approved for such use.

## 8.0 Portable Wooden and Fiberglass Ladders

1. All wood parts shall be free from sharp edges and splinters; sound and free from accepted visual inspection from shake, wane, compression failures, decay, or other irregularities. Low density wood shall not be used.
2. Step ladders longer than 20 feet shall not be supplied or used.
3. Single ladders longer than 30 feet shall not be supplied.
4. Two-section extension ladders longer than 60 feet shall not be supplied. All ladders of this type shall consist of two sections, one to fit within the side rails of the other, and arranged in such a manner that the upper section can be raised and lowered.
5. Trestle ladders, or extension sections or base sections of extension trestle ladders longer than 20 feet shall not be supplied.
6. Painter's stepladders longer than 12 feet shall not be supplied.
7. A mason's ladder is a special type of single ladder intended for use in heavy construction work. Mason's ladders longer than 40 feet shall not be supplied.
8. Trolley ladders and side-rolling ladders longer than 20 feet should not be supplied.



9. Ladders shall be maintained in good condition at all times, the joint between the steps and side rails shall be tight, all hardware and fittings securely attached, and the movable parts shall operate freely without binding or undue play.
10. Metal bearings of locks, wheels, pulleys, etc., shall be frequently lubricated.
11. Frayed or badly worn rope shall be replaced.
12. Safety feet and other auxiliary equipment shall be kept in good condition to insure proper performance.
13. Ladders shall be inspected frequently and those which have developed defects shall be withdrawn from service for repair or destruction and tagged or marked as "Dangerous, Do Not Use."
14. Rungs should be kept free of grease and oil.
15. Portable rung and cleat ladders shall, where possible, be used at such a pitch that the horizontal distance from the top support to the foot of the ladder is one-quarter of the working length of the ladder (the length along the ladder between the foot and the top support). The ladder shall be so placed as to prevent slipping, or it shall be lashed, or held in position. Ladders shall not be used in a horizontal position as platforms, runways, or scaffolds;
16. Ladders for which dimensions are specified should not be used by more than one man at a time nor with ladder jacks and scaffold planks where use by more than one man is anticipated. In such cases, specially designed ladders with larger dimensions of the parts should be procured;
17. Portable ladders shall be so placed that the side rails have a secure footing. The top rest for portable rung and cleat ladders shall be reasonably rigid and shall have ample strength to support the applied load;
18. Ladders shall not be placed in front of doors unless the door is blocked, locked, or guarded;
19. Ladders shall not be placed on boxes, barrels, or other unstable bases to obtain additional height;
20. Ladders with broken or missing steps, rungs, or cleats, broken side rails, or other faulty equipment shall not be used; improvised repairs shall not be made;
21. Short ladders shall not be spliced together to provide long sections;
22. Ladders made by fastening cleats across a single rail shall not be used;
23. Ladders shall not be used as guys, braces, or skids, or for other than their intended purposes;
24. Tops of the ordinary types of stepladders shall not be used as steps;
25. No ladder should be used to gain access to a roof unless the top of the ladder shall extend at least 3 feet above the point of support, at eave, gutter, or roofline;
26. Middle and top sections of sectional or window cleaner's ladders should not be used for bottom section unless the user equips them with safety shoes;



27. The user should equip all portable rung ladders with non-slip bases when there is a hazard of slipping. Non-slip bases are not intended as a substitute for care in safely placing, lashing, or holding a ladder that is being used upon oily, metal, concrete, or slippery surfaces;
28. The bracing on the back legs of step ladders is designed solely for increasing stability and not for climbing.

## **9.0 Portable Metal Ladders**

1. Ladders must be protected against corrosion unless inherently corrosion-resistant.
2. The spacing of rungs or steps shall be on 12-inch centers.
3. Rungs and steps shall be corrugated, knurled, dimpled, coated with skid-resistant material, or otherwise treated to minimize the possibility of slipping.
4. The minimum width between side rails of a straight ladder or any section of an extension ladder shall be 12 inches.
5. The length of single ladders or individual sections of ladders shall not exceed 30 feet. Two-section ladders shall not exceed 48 feet in length and over two-section ladders shall not exceed 60 feet in length.
6. Extension ladders shall be equipped with positive stops which will insure the overlap specified in the table above.
7. The length of a stepladder is measured by the length of the front rail. To be classified as a standard length ladder, the measured length shall be within plus or minus one-half inch of the specified length. Stepladders shall not exceed 20 feet in length.
8. The bottoms of the four rails are to be supplied with insulating non-slip material for the safety of the user.
9. A metal spreader or locking device of sufficient size and strength to securely hold the front and back sections in the open position shall be a component of each stepladder. The spreader shall have all sharp points or edges covered or removed to protect the user.
10. Trestle ladders or extension sections or base sections of extension trestle ladders shall be not more than 20 feet in length.
11. The length of a platform ladder shall not exceed 20 feet. The length of a platform ladder shall be measured along the front rail from the floor to the platform.
12. To get maximum serviceability, safety, and to eliminate unnecessary damage of equipment, good safe practices in the use and care of ladder equipment must be employed by the users.
13. Ladders must be maintained in good usable condition at all times.



14. If a ladder is involved in any of the following, immediate inspection is necessary:
  - If ladders tip over, inspect ladder for side rails dents or bends, or excessively dented rungs; check all rung-to-side-rail connections; check hardware connections; check rivets for shear.
  - If ladders are exposed to oil and grease, equipment should be cleaned of oil, grease, or slippery materials. This can easily be done with a solvent or steam cleaning.
  - Ladders having defects are to be marked and taken out of service until repaired by either maintenance department or the manufacturer.
15. A simple rule for setting up a ladder at the proper angle is to place the base a distance from the vertical wall equal to one-fourth the working length of the ladder.
16. Portable ladders are designed as a one-man working ladder based on a 200-pound load.
17. The ladder base section must be placed with a secure footing.
18. The top of the ladder must be placed with the two rails supported, unless equipped with a single support attachment.
19. When ascending or descending, the climber must face the ladder.
20. Ladders must not be tied or fastened together to provide longer sections. They must be equipped with the hardware fittings necessary if the manufacturer endorses extended uses.
21. Ladders should not be used as a brace, skid, guy or gin pole, gangway, or for other uses than that for which they were intended, unless specifically recommended for use by the manufacturer.

## 10.0 Scaffolding

All scaffolding shall comply with the requirements specified in 29 CFR Part 1926 Subpart L in addition to the following requirements:

1. Erect scaffolding under proper supervision.
2. Planks and other material used in building scaffolding must be sound and free from knots (especially cut lumber, commonly referred to as “scaffolding lumber”). Keep planks in good condition with a spar varnish. Never paint the planks.
3. Be sure that planking is adequately cleated. Scaffolding over ten (10) feet should have toe boards, mid-rails, and handrails. Follow the County’s Fall Protection Policy.
4. Tools on top of the scaffolding are liable to fall and injure someone. Keep tools in a bucket or box lashed on to the scaffolding.
5. Ensure that scaffold wheels (if provided) are locked and that the scaffold is level.



## 11.0 Equipment Inspection

1. Always check ladders and scaffolding thoroughly before using. A rung, foot, or guard rail could be broken or loose. Use only OSHA approved equipment. Never use make-shift ladders or scaffolding.
2. Inspect wooden ladders periodically. Wooden ladders shrink over a period of time. In a stepladder, this may cause steps or back bar members to become loose. Hold the rods beneath the steps with a pair of pliers and tighten the nut at the end with a wrench to maintain strength and steadiness.
3. Do not paint wooden ladders or scaffold planks as defects may be covered by paint. Use a good grade of spar varnish or a mixture of linseed oil and turpentine to preserve the wood.

## 12.0 Placement and Securing of Ladders

When using ladders, set them on a firm dry base at the proper angle. The distance between the foot of the ladder and the wall it rests against should be equal to about one quarter  $\frac{1}{4}$  the distance to the support point of the ladder. When possible, secure ladders in place with ropes, hooks, spikes, or other anti-slip devices.

Always be careful of the placement of a ladder. Avoid placing ladders within the arc of a swinging door (unless the door is locked), near blind corners, or where they could be in the path of vehicles or equipment. Use signs or barricades to alert others.

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**End Policy**