



Safe at home. Safe at work.

MARCH  
2024

# Safe Positioning and Climbing

## Safe Positioning

- Confirm that the ground where the ladder is set-up is firm and level, or use approved accessories such as ladder levelers.
  - Using a ladder on unlevel ground can cause instability, which can lead to serious injury or death.
  - Always use approved accessories to level a ladder.
    - Never use blocks, buckets, or other unstable means to level a ladder, as those items can slip out or tip over when ladder is in use, causing serious injury or death.
- Ensure all ladder feet are firmly in contact with ground surface and both top rails of non-self-supporting ladders are firmly in contact with upper surfaces before climbing to avoid instability or slip issues.
  - Ensure the top three rungs of a single or extension ladder are extended above any upper surface where access to that surface is required.
- Never adjust or move an extension ladder from above – only adjust the length and placement from the ground. Ladder locks can be disengaged, foot placement cannot be ensured, and ladder angle cannot be verified when adjusted from above.
- Before climbing, always ensure the spreader bars on stepladders are completely open and locked in place and that both ladder locks on extension ladders are completely engaged around the rung.
- Secure ladder where possible by tying off, blocking, bracing, or having an assistant hold the ladder.
  - Not properly securing a ladder during use can result in issues with stability and slipping.
  - With extension or leaning ladders, ensure ladder is set up at the proper angle and secured from movement before climbing.
    - A shallow angle increases the risk of slide out.
    - Using a ladder at too shallow of an angle can cause extreme loading on the ladder, which is outside of the intended load rating.
- Ensure that any surrounding doors are blocked from opening, locked, or properly guarded.
  - Using a ladder in front of a door can allow the door to be opened while climbing or working from a ladder causing the ladder to be moved or tipped over while in use, resulting in the user falling.



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# Safe Positioning and Climbing (continued)

## Safe Climbing

- Always maintain three points of contact while climbing by keeping two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder.
  - Climb slowly and deliberately and avoid sudden movements.
  - While ascending or descending the ladder, always be attentive to what you are doing and your surroundings.
  - Use towlines, a tool belt, or an assistant to convey materials so that your hands are free when climbing.
- Never climb, stand, or sit on the top step or top cap of a stepladder. Do not straddle the top of the ladder.
  - These improper positions can affect the stability of the ladder and can cause the user to lose their balance.
- Always keep the center of your stomach between the ladder side rails. Not properly securing a ladder during use can result in issues with stability and slipping.
  - Do not overreach, lean, or pull the ladder sideways while working.
- Never attempt to move a ladder while standing on it. This can result in issues with balance, stability, and slip. It also damages the ladder and can cause premature wear.
- If using a ladder outdoors, ensure that the weather is safe for ladder use.
  - Inclement weather, such as rain, ice, mud or wind can cause the ladder to slip or become unstable, resulting in serious injury or death.
- Clean the soles of your shoes to maximize traction and avoid slipping.
- Ensure that you are in good health; not influenced by drugs, not tired, dizzy, or prone to losing your balance before using the ladder.



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