Ladder Safety

Falls are the leading cause of death in construction and annually make up nearly a third of those deaths. Employers can prevent most ladder fall hazards by taking the following safety measures:

**March is National Ladder Safety Month:** Every step matters: From step stools to extension ladders, make sure you're putting the right foot forward. Remember bringing it up to a toolbox talk.

**Train Workers to Use Ladders Safely.** Employers must train each worker to recognize and minimize ladder-related hazards.

**Common Ladder Hazards**
- Damaged.
- Ladders on slippery or unstable surface.
- Unlocked ladder spreaders.
- Standing on the top step or top cap.
- Loading ladder beyond rated load.
- Ladders in high-traffic location.
- Reaching outside ladder side rails.
- Ladders in close proximity to electrical wiring/equipment.

**Provide the Right Ladder for the Job with the Proper Load Capacity.** Select a ladder based on the expected load capacity (duty rating), the type of work to be done and the correct height. There are five categories of ladder duty ratings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Duty Rating</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Load</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAA*</td>
<td>Special Duty</td>
<td>Rugged</td>
<td>375 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>Extra Duty</td>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>300 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Heavy Duty</td>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>250 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Medium Duty</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>225 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Light Duty</td>
<td>Household</td>
<td>200 lbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Safe Ladder Use - DO:**
- Maintain a 3-point contact (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand) when climbing/descending a ladder.
- Face the ladder when climbing up or descending.
- Keep the body inside the side rails.
- Use extra care when getting on or off the ladder at the top or bottom. Avoid tipping the ladder over sideways or causing the ladder base to slide out.
- Carry tools in a tool belt or raise tools up using a hand line. Never carry tools in your hands while climbing up/down a ladder.
- Extend the top of the ladder three feet above the landing.
- Keep ladders free of any slippery materials.

**Safe Ladder Use - DO NOT:**
- Place a ladder on boxes, barrels, or unstable bases.
- Use a ladder on soft ground or unstable footing.
- Exceed the ladder’s maximum load rating.
- Tie two ladders together to make them longer.
- Ignore nearby overhead power lines.
- Move or shift a ladder with a person or equipment on the ladder.
- Lean out beyond the ladder’s side rails.
- Use an extension ladder horizontally like a platform.

For more information, please contact HIOSH at: dlir.hiosh.ct@hawaii.gov or 808-586-9100