



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



Ladder Use General Safety Message

Ladders are an essential tool on many job sites and at home across the United States. Because of their widespread use and the inherent danger of working at heights, they are responsible for a significant number of injuries both on and off the job. Understanding the hazards of using a ladder, following the necessary safe work practices, and avoiding complacency can be a lifesaver.

Common Causes of Ladder Falls

1. Unsafe actions when using ladders— People often do not follow the safe work practices when using ladders. Standing on the top step of a ladder is a common and deadly practice. Other actions like climbing up a ladder carrying objects, leaning to reach for something, and attempting to move the ladder while still on it are some common practices that lead to injuries.
2. No inspection prior to use— Problems such as cracked or broken rungs, loose bolts, non-approved fixes, etc. lead to injuries.
3. Not using the correct ladder— People will often use the same ladder for many different jobs and situations.

Ladder Safe Work Practices

- * Ensure you understand the hazards associated with the ladder you are using.
- * Never stand on the top step if it is not designed to be a step.
- * Do not lean or reach to grab something while on a ladder. Climb down and reposition the ladder closer to the object or area you were trying to reach.
- * Do not carry objects up the ladder in your hands. Use a tool belt or a retrieval system to bring tools up to you once you have climbed the ladder. Always have your hands free when climbing so you are able to have three points of contact with the ladder. Always inspect a ladder before use. If there are any problems with it, immediately tag it out of use and find a properly functioning ladder.
- * Use the correct ladder for the job. There are many types of ladders to work in different situations. Check weight ratings to ensure you do not overload the ladder during use.
- * Always secure the ladder. Make sure the ladder is stable on the ground before climbing up. Tie off the ladder to the structure you are next to. Have someone hold the ladder to secure it.

Discussion points

1. Does anyone have a personal story about someone they know who was injured while using a ladder?
2. What are other hazards to consider when using a ladder?