

Loss

Control



FARMERS

Information Bulletin

Ladders

The safe use of ladders can reduce the potential of workplace accidents and injuries. According to the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 500,000 people are treated annually in hospital emergency rooms, doctor's offices, clinics and other medical facilities. Most injuries are cuts, bruises and fractured bones.

Working safely with and from ladders can be improved by following several safety tips.

- *Don't work alone when using a ladder.*
Whenever possible, do not work alone. In the event of a fall from a ladder, it is important to have someone available to provide assistance or to call for emergency services if needed.
- *Inspect ladders before use.*
Check for loose or missing rungs, cleats, or bracing. Check for loose nails, bolts, or screws. Check for cracked, broken, split, dented, or badly worn rungs, cleats, or side rails. Look for wood splinters on wooden ladders. Check for corrosion on metal ladders. Check for missing or damaged side rails or footpads. Don't use any ladder that is in poor condition and report it to management.
- *Properly set up ladders at the work area.*
Ladders should be placed on a firm and level surface. Avoid soft surfaces or muddy areas. Never place the ladder on an uneven floor or surface. Always use the ladder locks or braces before climbing the ladder.
- *Do not use a ladder as a chair or resting place during breaks.*
Ladders are not designed for chairs or rest areas. Always use an appropriate chair or seat for breaks.

- *Use the appropriate ladder for the job.*
Ladders come in all types and lengths because different tasks require a different type of ladder. Always use the appropriate ladder for each job.
- *Move materials with caution when using a ladder.*
Use care when working from a ladder to reach for materials. Don't reach too far and don't attempt to move heavy or bulky objects that could cause you to lose your balance.
- *Reposition ladders closer to the work area as work progresses.*
Reaching or leaning could result in the ladder falling over or shifting to the side unexpectedly.
- *Use caution climbing a ladder and get help when needed.*
Make sure the ladder is steady as you climb. Have a co-worker hold the ladder when necessary.

In the event of a fall from a ladder. You need to evaluate your condition after the fall when at all possible and use the following guides:

- *Calmly assess the situation and determine if you are hurt.*
- *Get up slowly and make sure you have proper balance.*
- *If you feel an injury has occurred that prevents standing or walking, don't panic. Call for assistance. For serious injuries, call 911.*
- *If uninjured, rest for a short period to regain your composure before climbing the ladder again.*

When a fall occurs on the job, fellow workers should go to the fallen worker's assistance. Using the above guidelines, help them evaluate their condition and the need for additional medical attention.