

PORTABLE LADDER SAFETY POLICY

Effective Date: March 2011

1. Applicability

This policy applies to all OHSU employees (including employees and students), at all OHSU locations, who use portable ladders at work.

2. Scope and Purpose

This policy describes how portable ladders are to be selected, used, inspected, and maintained.

3. Implementation

Safe ladder usage is the responsibility of each employee. This includes selection, inspection, and correct use, as well as reporting unsafe conditions to a supervisor.

Department managers are responsible to ensure their employees are provided safe, serviceable, and appropriate type of ladders, and the necessary training to use them correctly.

4. Requirements

a) Ladder Selection

Different ladders are made for specific uses. For a given task, you must select the right ladder to ensure your safety. Consideration must be given to the working height, capacity, type, placement and condition of ladder for your work.

Prior to purchasing a ladder, check with Environmental Health & Radiation Safety (EHRS) for specifications. New ladders must meet or exceed ANSI Type I-A specifications, with preference given to fiberglass construction.

Portable Ladder Ratings

TYPEDUTY RATING WORKING LOAD				
IA	Industrial	extra heavy 300 lbs. maximum		
I	Industrial	heavy 250 lbs. maximum		
II	Commercial	medium 225 lbs. maximum		
	Household	light 200 lbs. maximum		

Fiberglass ladders must comply with American National Standard A14.5-1992 (or newer). Wood ladders must comply with American National Standard A14.1-1994 (or newer). Metal ladders must comply with American National Standard A14.2-1990 (or newer).

i. Step Ladders

These are self-supporting ladders with flat steps and hinged backs. They may be constructed of aluminum, fiberglass, or wood, and they must have a metal spreader that locks the ladder open. They should only be used on firm and level surfaces. The maximum allowable length for a step ladder is 20 feet.

These must **never** be used as a straight-type ladder (leaned up against a wall for use), as the footing was not designed for safe use in this manner.

Never stand or sit on the top two steps of a step ladder! A longer ladder may be required to safely perform a given task.

iii. Straight-type Ladders

These are not self-supporting ladders. They must be leaned up against a stable surface, with a 1:4 scope (1 foot away from the wall for every 4 feet in height). They may be constructed of aluminum, fiberglass, or wood, in either single or extendable lengths. The maximum allowable length for a single ladder is 30 feet, while extension ladders may reach up to 72 feet. Both should be placed on firm, stable footings, or utilize leg extensions or non-slip feet.

Straight-type ladders should extend at least 3 feet above the accessed area, and they must be tied off to a secure anchor point if they are to be used repeatedly in the same spot.

iv. Rolling Ladders

These self-supporting, stair-type ladders exist primarily in warehouse environments where rolling surfaces are smooth and level. They have integral handrails and usually have locking devices for stability.

Most rolling ladders are constructed of steel, so be aware of conductivity risks when working near electrical equipment.

b) Use

Never use a ladder unless you have been trained.

Always use three points of contact when using ladders (e.g.: two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder).

Portable ladders are to be used by only one person at a time, unless specifically designed otherwise.

Protect the base of ladders in high traffic areas. If you must close an area due to safety concerns, barricade access routes and post alternatives, as appropriate. If you cannot close an area, you must have another employee guard the ladder base.

Make sure ladder treads are clear of mud and debris before using.

OHSU employees may only use a contractor-owned ladder with the contractor's permission and only after assessing the ladders' condition.

Never:

- Carry awkward loads while using a ladder. Use ropes to haul heavy items up once you have reached your working height or surface.
- Place tools or supplies on ladders steps if they could fall. Many injuries are caused by falling objects.
- Use wood or metal ladders around exposed, energized electrical equipment. Ladders can provide energy an easy path to ground.
- Paint a ladder. Paint conceals defects and can cover rating labels.
- Reach far out from or turn excessively while on a ladder. These actions risk destabilizing the ladder.
- Store a ladder in the rain or direct sun. These shorten ladder service lives.
- Lean a ladder on windows, unsecured surfaces, or other unstable support. Your support point must be as stable as your base.
- Use a defective ladder. Report these to Environmental Health & Safety for repair or disposal.

c) Inspection

The safety of ladders must be **assessed** by the user prior to each use. Only ladders in good condition are to be used.

Periodic, comprehensive **inspections** are recommended to ensure each ladder is fit for use. The <u>Ladder Inspection Checklist</u> (see attached) may be referenced to ensure a complete inspection. Departments may wish to keep records of ladder inspections. Records may also include dated inspection verification stickers applied directly to ladders.

Unsafe ladders must be clearly marked or tagged as unsafe (e.g.: "**Danger - Do Not Use**"). Environmental Health & Safety can help determine repair or disposal needs.

d) Training

Each employee that routinely uses ladders at OHSU must receive initial training on the provisions in this policy prior to working with ladders.

Training will include the following:

- A summary of the requirements in this policy and general equipment safety.
- Orientation to the ladders that are available to an individual for tasks required for their job.
- Physical hazards associated with ladder use in the workplace.
- Proper use and safety procedures to protect against accidents, including placement and orientation of ladders.
- Inspection procedures and record keeping.
- Resources for answers to use, maintenance, and safety questions

Training may be performed by individual departments or can be arranged by contacting EHRS.

Training of temporary or contracted employees is a joint responsibility of the employer and OHSU. The employer must provide general training, and OHSU must inform the employee of specific hazards.

5. Resources

Information about this policy, training, safe work practices, regulatory compliance, or industry standards is available through EHRS. This policy was written and is maintained by EHRS.

History: Replaces policy revised October 1, 2001

Reference: Oregon OSHA (OAR 437-02-0026)

Related policies, procedures and forms:

Responsible Office: Environmental Health and Radiation Safety

Ladder Use and Inspection Checklist Oregon Health & Science University

Planning:

Intended use considerations

- Is the height of the ladder correct for access needs?
- Is there a possibility of contacting energized electrical equipment?
- Will the ladder be set in an area of foot/vehicle traffic?

Inspection:

Ladder Inspection Checklist			
General	Needs repair	O.K.	Date repaired
Warning stickers/capacity label			
Loose steps or rungs (considered loose if they can be moved at all with the hand)?			
Loose nails, screws, bolts, or other metal parts?			
Cracked, spilt, or broken uprights, braces, cap or rungs?			
Slivers on uprights, rungs, or steps?			
Missing, damaged or worn non-slip bases?			
Step ladders			
Wobbly (from side strain)?			
Loose or bent hinge spreaders?			
Stop on hinge spreaders broken?			
Loose hinges?			
Broken, split, or worn steps?			
Extension ladders			
Loose, broken, or missing extension locks?			
Defective locks that do not seat properly while extended?			
Worn or rotted rope?			

Based on your inspection and intended use, is this ladder the right choice for the job?

Yes_____ No_____ (If no, discuss needs with your supervisor)

Based on your inspection, is it in acceptable condition?

Yes_____ No_____ (If no, tag "Danger, Do Not Use" and report to your supervisor or EH&RS)