



SHIFT BRIEFING



EXTENSION LADDER BEST PRACTICES

When using an extension ladder, it is important to remember that several characteristics make them different from other ladders. You must keep special safety precautions in mind to protect yourself.

How Are Extension Ladders Different?

Unlike a stepladder that requires four level supports for its side rails, the extension ladder has only two bottom support points to provide a base for the two top supports. Extension ladders are non-self-supporting adjustable ladders consisting of two or more sections that travel in guides or brackets arranged to permit length adjustment. They are designed for use by only one person.

Height Restrictions

In some cases, work sites may put restrictions on ladder height. When you use longer ladders, you may find that they cannot be set up at the proper 75°, even when fully retracted. To prevent the bottom of the ladder from sliding out, choose a shorter extension or single ladder.

An extension ladder must extend at least three feet above the top point of support.

Bridging the Gap

At times, using a certain ladder length can create a gap in the height of a wall that the user can reach. When working with a 14-foot extension ladder, working from the ladder below 10 feet is a problem, and a stepladder or shorter non-self-supporting ladder is recommended.

Using the Ladder

- When selecting an extension ladder, know that the top of it must extend at least 3 feet above the roof eave.
- Ensure you are not setting up an extension ladder upside down with the fly section at the bottom and the base section at the top, rung locks engaged.
- When the extension ladder has been used as a single ladder, ensure that all guides or brackets are correctly assembled and engaged before you use it.
- Never make an extension adjustment when someone is standing on the ladder.
- Be sure the extension rope is tracking correctly on the pulley before making an extension adjustment.
- Never step or stand higher than the step indicated on the label marking the highest standing level.
- Never attempt to mount the ladder from the side or step from one ladder to another unless the ladder is secured against sideways motion.

Care and Maintenance

- Inspect the ladder thoroughly before you use it each time.
- Clean climbing and gripping surfaces if they have been in contact with oil, grease, or other slippery materials.
- Check bolts, rivets, rail connections, and anti-slip feet for wear and tear.
- Inspect ropes, cables, and pulleys for wear.
- When transporting ladders on vehicle ladder racks, support them properly with wood- or rubber-covered pipe with as little overhang as possible and secure the ladder to each support point.

If a ladder has been exposed to heat, or corrosive substances such as acids, or has bent or broken side rails, the ladder must be destroyed so that no one can use it.