Falls are a leading cause of unintentional death over the nation, with over 43% of fatal falls in the past decade having involved a ladder (American Journal of Public Health).

Ladders are a frequently used tool that employees use to accomplish elevated work tasks. Like any tool, ladders must be inspected before each use and used properly to ensure employee safety.

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL LADDERS**

- Ladders must be maintained in a good condition. Prior to use employees shall visually inspect the ladder and its components for damage and defects.
  - Damaged or defective ladders shall be removed from service.
  - Do not modify or repair without manufacturer's approval and parts
- Ladders capacity/duty rating shall be clearly marked and observed by its user.
  - Always account for your fully clothed weight plus the weight of any tools and materials that are carried onto the ladder.
  - Type III ladders (Capacity limit 200lb) are prohibited from use.
- Use fiberglass ladders when performing electrical work.

**WHAT IS THE RIGHT HEIGHT?**

- The horizontal distance from the support structure to the foot of the ladder should be 4:1 the working length of the ladder (i.e. 20' ladder should have its base 5' from the wall).
- Never stand on the top three steps of an extension ladder, unless utilizing ladder extensions (pictured above).

**EXTENSION LADDER OPERATIONS**

- Always seek assistance when moving and setting up heavy ladders.
- Always set-up on stable and level surfaces.
- Always extend the side rails 3’ above the upper landing surface when using ladder for access.
- Always have a coworker hold the ladder until it can be tied off or otherwise secured to the top of the extension ladder to ensure stability.
- Always face the ladder and use the “3-Points of Contact Rule”: at least two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand when ascending or descending a ladder.
- Always keep hands free for climbing, do not carry equipment, materials and or tooling while climbing. Heavy or bulky items should be brought up only after you have reached the desired location.
  - Utilize a rope and lifting bucket to hoist equipment, materials and tooling to your work area.
Always keep the area at the bottom of a ladder clear and free of obstructions.

Always ensure the proper overlap for extension ladder sections, see manufacturer’s requirements.

Always keep your belt buckle within the side rails of the ladder. Reaching or leaning can cause a ladder to shift and result in a fall.

Always maintain a minimum distance of 10’ (≤ 50 volts) from overhead powerlines or more depending on line voltage.

Never exceed more than one person at a time

Never stand on the top three steps of an extension ladder, unless using side rail extensions (pictured right).

Never over reach or try to move a ladder while on it.

Only you can prevent ladder related injuries, so think before you act and always use ladders correctly!