

# HAZARD ALERT

CPWR [●]  
THE CENTER FOR CONSTRUCTION  
RESEARCH AND TRAINING

# LADDERS



## Am I in danger?

If you use a ladder on a construction site, then the answer is **YES**.

Falls are the leading cause of deaths and injuries in the construction industry.

- Each year, more than 4,000 construction workers are injured so seriously by ladder falls that they miss work.
- Each year, about 70 construction workers DIE in falls from ladders.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT CARR, PH.D., P.E.

## Electrocution Hazard

Falls aren't the only way to get hurt on a ladder!

Contact with overhead power lines is a common, and sometimes fatal, source of injury for those working with ladders. Make sure your ladder is positioned **at least 10 feet from power lines**.

Aluminum is an excellent conductor of electricity. Working around wiring? Fiberglass is a better choice.



A painter was electrocuted when moving a metal ladder on this jobsite.



## Find out more about construction hazards.

Get more of these Hazard Alert cards – and cards on other topics.

**Call 301-578-8500**

## To avoid a fall ...



Not every defect is this obvious

### 1 Inspect the ladder before every use

Inspect the rails, rungs, feet, and spreaders or rung locks of your ladder for defects or damage **every time** you use it. If you see any damage, **tag it** “do not use” and request another ladder in proper working order. And check your ladder’s duty rating – certain ladders may not support you and your toolbelt!



The minute you take to tie off could save your life

### 2 Position your ladder properly

**For all ladders:**

- Make sure you have level, solid footing for your ladder.
- Position the ladder near your work to avoid overreaching.

**For extension ladders:**

- Set the base one foot away from the building for every four feet of height.
- Tie off the ladder at the top – and bottom where possible!



PHOTO COURTESY OF KIEWIT POWER CONSTRUCTORS

### 3 Use the ladder safely

- Maintain three-point contact with the ladder at all times.
- Do not stand on the top two rungs of a stepladder, or the top four rungs of an extension ladder.
- Have your partner hold the ladder to steady it as you ascend.
- **Don't carry tools and materials while climbing. Use a rope to haul or hoist materials to the upper level!**



PHOTO COURTESY GREATER PA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS

## Is a ladder the right tool for the job?

For **work at heights**, consider using a **scaffold** or **aerial lift**. The wider work platform and guard rails can substantially reduce your risk of falls.

**If you think you are in danger:**

Contact your supervisor.  
Contact your union.

Call OSHA  
**1-800-321-OSHA**