

USING LADDERS SAFELY

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At least 93,000 people a year end up in a hospital emergency room with injuries sustained on ladders. Here are some safety tips to keep you from being one of them:

- Make sure your ladder is long enough for you to reach the job without standing on the top two steps or overextending your body.
- Check the ladder for cracks or weak spots before you use it. Metal ladders should have nonskid steps and footings. (Don't paint a ladder; you'll hide defects.)
- Make sure the soles of your shoes or boots are dry and have enough tread to prevent slipping.
- Always ensure that the ladder is planted firmly on the ground or floor before climbing it.
- Never place a ladder in front of a door that someone may open.
- Wear tools on a belt and keep them in your pocket so you can keep your hands free when climbing up or down a ladder.
- To avoid losing your balance while standing on a ladder, don't lean too far back or to the side.
- Don't use a ladder outdoors on a very windy day.
- To avoid electrocution, don't use metal ladders near power lines.