Ladder Safety Checklist

A checklist for selecting, inspecting and safely using ladders at work.

Selecting the Right Ladder

- [ ] Match the ladder type to the task, such as step, extension or platform.
- [ ] Confirm the duty rating exceeds the worker plus tools and materials.
- [ ] Choose a non-conductive ladder for any work near electricity.
  Never use a metal ladder around live electrical hazards.
- [ ] Select a height that avoids standing on the top rung or cap.
- [ ] Confirm the ladder is rated for the environment and conditions.

Pre-Use Inspection

- [ ] Check rails and rungs for cracks, bends, splits or corrosion.
- [ ] Confirm rungs and steps are tight, clean and free of grease.
- [ ] Inspect feet, slip-resistant pads and spreader locks.
- [ ] Verify ropes, pulleys and rung locks on extension ladders work smoothly.
  Remove any defective ladder from service and tag it immediately.
- [ ] Confirm labels and duty-rating markings are present and legible.

Setup and Positioning

- [ ] Place the ladder on firm, level and dry ground.
- [ ] Set extension ladders at the 4-to-1 angle and secure the base.
- [ ] Extend the ladder about three feet above the landing point.
- [ ] Fully open stepladders and lock the spreaders before climbing.
  Never use a closed stepladder leaning against a wall.
- [ ] Tie off or have the ladder held to prevent slipping or tipping.
- [ ] Keep the ladder clear of doorways, traffic and overhead hazards.

Safe Climbing and Use

- [ ] Maintain three-point contact while climbing up and down.
- [ ] Face the ladder and keep your body centered between the rails.
- [ ] Carry tools in a belt or hoist them rather than in your hands.
- [ ] Do not overreach; move the ladder instead of leaning out.
  Keep your belt buckle between the rails to avoid overreaching.
- [ ] Limit the ladder to one person unless it is rated for more.
- [ ] Avoid standing on the top two rungs of a stepladder.

Storage and Maintenance

- [ ] Store ladders flat or on racks, supported and protected from damage.
- [ ] Keep ladders clean and dry to prevent slips and corrosion.
- [ ] Repair or replace damaged ladders rather than using them.

- [ ] Confirm ladders are inspected periodically beyond pre-use checks.
- [ ] Important: this is general guidance only and does not replace OSHA regulations, formal training, manufacturer instructions or your employer's safety program; confirm requirements with a qualified person.