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## Loss Control Services Publication

### Checklist

#### Portable Ladders Safety Checklist

Portable ladders should be designed with the proper strength to support the worker, as well as his/her tools and materials. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) prohibits using portable stepladders longer than 20 ft.(6.1 m), single ladders longer than 30 ft.(9.1 m), and extension ladders longer than 60 ft.(18.3 m). The primary hazard when using a portable ladder is falling, which can be caused by incorrect placement or improper use. In addition, a poorly designed ladder may collapse under the load. The following checklist can be used to help evaluate the safety and use of portable ladders.

##### Design and Construction

- Are non-slip safety feet provided on all ladders?
- Are metal ladders legibly marked with signs reading "CAUTION – DO NOT USE AROUND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT" or equivalent wording?
- Are the rungs of ladders uniformly spaced at 12 in.(30.5 cm), center to center?

##### Maintenance

- Are the joints between the steps and side rails of the ladder tight?
- Are all hardware and fittings of the ladder securely attached?
- Are all moveable parts of the ladder operating freely without binding or undue play?
- Are ladder rungs and steps free of grease and oil?

##### Placement and Use

- Are ladders prohibited from being placed in front of door openings?
- Are workers instructed to face the ladder when ascending or descending?
- When portable ladders are used to gain access to elevated platforms, roofs, etc., does the ladder always extend at least 3 ft.(0.9 m) above the elevated surface?
- Are single and extension ladders required to be lashed or otherwise held in place?
- Are workers instructed to only adjust extension ladders while standing at a base and not while standing on the ladder or from a position above the ladder?
- Are workers instructed not to stand or work on the top three rungs of a ladder that has no handholds, unless the structure provides a firm handhold or the worker is tied off?
- Are stepladders always fully opened prior to use?
- Are workers instructed not to use the top (cap) of a stepladder as the support for a platform?
- Are workers instructed that only one worker at a time should be on a portable ladder unless the ladder is specially designed for use by more than one person?
- Are workers prohibited from carrying tools, except on a tool belt, equipment, or materials while on a ladder?

- Are portable metal ladders prohibited from being used for electrical work, near live electrical parts, or within 6 ft.(1.8 m) of high voltage electrical lines?
- Are portable ladders placed at least 1 ft.(0.3 m) out from the wall for every 4 ft.(1.2 m) of ladder length?

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