

## **Toolbox Talk Training: Seven Things You Should NEVER Do With A Portable Ladder**

We've covered several toolbox talks on selecting and using portable ladders safely, as well as conditions and behaviors to avoid. However, it's just as important to recognize the ways ladders are commonly misused when they are used for purposes they were never designed for. Today, we'll go over a list of practices that should never be done with a portable ladder.

- **Never use a ladder as a makeshift scaffold or work platform.** Do not place a board between two step ladders to create a walking surface, and do not lay an extension ladder across saw horses or other supports to use as a platform. Also, never set a ladder up as a ramp for walking between levels. These uses create serious fall hazards and are not what ladders are designed for.
- **Never climb the back side of a step ladder.** The rear braces are only intended to support the ladder structure, not a person. They are not designed for climbing, do not provide safe footing, and are not slip-resistant. (Note: this does not apply to ladders specifically designed by the manufacturer for two-sided climbing, if applicable.)
- **Do not use a ladder as a storage rack.** Hanging tools or placing materials on the ladder rails or rungs can create hazards. Items may fall and strike someone, or they may interfere with safe climbing and proper hand placement.
- **Never connect two ladders together.** Attempting to tie or attach ladders to create extra length is unsafe and can easily lead to structural failure or loss of stability.
- **Do not set ladders on moving or unstable equipment.** This includes truck beds, trailers, forklift forks, or buckets of heavy equipment. Unexpected movement can cause the ladder to shift or fall, even if the vehicle appears stationary.
- **Do not reuse damaged ladder sections.** If any part of a ladder is broken or damaged, the entire ladder must be removed from service. Do not attempt to salvage or repurpose "good" sections, and never make field repairs or structural modifications.
- **Never allow more than one person on a ladder at a time.** Multiple users increase the load and significantly reduce stability. This practice is also prohibited by most manufacturers, except on ladders specifically designed for two-person use.

These unsafe practices are common shortcuts that can quickly lead to serious injuries. Following proper ladder use guidelines is essential for preventing accidents.

Can anyone share other examples of unsafe ladder misuse they've seen or want to highlight? Thank you for your participation. Please remember to sign the training certification form before leaving so you receive credit for attending today's training session.

