Toolbox Talk Training: Ladder Safety – Portable Ladder Storage

Portable ladder storage needs attention between uses. CCOHS recommends protecting stored ladders from weather and accidental contact, supporting them to prevent sagging, and keeping wooden ladders away from dampness and excessive heat.

This free online toolbox talk covers storage locations, support, environmental care, and keeping defective ladders out of use. Follow the ladder manufacturer's instructions and your employer's procedures. Use the talk as a discussion aid, not a substitute for required training.

Ladder care includes storage and inspection. Follow the ladder manufacturer's instructions and keep ladders protected from weather, accidental contact, and storage conditions that may damage them. In construction work, OSHA requires competent-person inspection for visible defects periodically and after an occurrence that could affect safe use. Structurally defective portable ladders must be marked or tagged and removed from service until repaired. Today, discuss where your crew stores ladders and how defective ladders are kept out of use.

Correct Portable Ladder Storage

- Protect ladders from weather and accidental contact by people or machinery.
- Follow the ladder manufacturer's storage instructions.
- Use horizontal racks or wall mounting with support to prevent sagging, as CCOHS recommends.
- Keep wooden ladders in a well-ventilated location away from dampness and excessive heat.
- Protect plastic-reinforced ladders from excessive sunlight.
- Keep ladders clean and do not store other materials on them.
- Do not store a ladder where it could fall on someone, create a trip hazard, or cause another injury.

Storage Mistakes to Avoid

- Leaving ladders unprotected from weather.
- Storing wooden ladders in damp locations or near excessive heat.

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- Exposing plastic-reinforced ladders to excessive sunlight.
- Using racks without enough support to prevent sagging.
- Putting other materials on a stored ladder.
- Storing a ladder where people or machinery could accidentally contact it, or where it could fall or create a trip hazard.
- Leaving a defective ladder available for use instead of tagging it and removing it from service.

01. Sunlight and UV Damage

CCOHS advises protecting plastic-reinforced ladders from excessive sunlight because ultraviolet light may degrade the plastic resins. Store ladders where they are protected from the weather and follow the ladder manufacturer's instructions. CCOHS says to replace a ladder if its strength is questionable.

02. Moisture and Damp Environments

Protect stored ladders from weather. CCOHS recommends keeping wooden ladders in a well-ventilated location away from dampness and excessive heat. Keep ladders clean and follow the manufacturer's care instructions. Tag defective ladders and remove them from service for authorized repair or replacement.

03. Heat and Fire Exposure

Keep stored ladders away from excessive heat. CCOHS advises keeping wooden ladders in a well-ventilated location away from dampness and excessive heat, and not exposing fiberglass ladders to excessive temperatures. Do not use a ladder that has been exposed to heat or fire until its condition and strength have been checked. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for inspection, repair, or replacement.

04. High-Traffic Impact Zones

CCOHS recommends storing ladders where people or machinery will not accidentally contact them. Do not store a ladder where it could fall on someone or create a trip hazard. Keep defective ladders out of service and follow the manufacturer's inspection, repair, and replacement instructions.

Discussion question for your crew: Does anyone have additional suggestions or experiences related to safe ladder storage in your work areas? Before leaving today's safety meeting, please sign the attendance record (sign-in form) on the back of the printed handout. The form records who attended this portable ladder storage talk. Signatures record attendance only, not certification or completion of required training. Keep the completed record with your site's training files.

General safety information only. This material does not replace required training, a site-specific hazard assessment, or professional safety advice. Before using it, verify current requirements with OSHA (osha.gov) and your employer. Follow applicable regulations, equipment manufacturers' instructions, and your employer's safety procedures.

Sources: CCOHS, Ladders - Portable (Canadian guidance). Cited paragraphs only. Discussion aid.

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TOOLBOX TALK TRAINING SIGN-IN FORM

Topic discussed: Ladder Safety - Portable Ladder Storage

Company Name:_____ Date:_____

Discussion led by:_____

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