PORTABLE LADDER SAFETY GUIDELINES

Wherever ladders are required to provide access to places where people need to work, CSUF shall provide and maintain them. However, employees must use certain precautions before and while using ladders. These Guidelines will help CSUF employees properly care for and use ladders.

Safe ladder usage is the responsibility of each employee. This includes selection, inspection, and correct use, as well as reporting unsafe conditions to a supervisor. Department managers are responsible to ensure their employees are provided safe, serviceable, and appropriate type of ladders, and the necessary training to use them correctly.

Ladder Selection

Different ladders are made for specific uses. For a given task, you must select the right ladder to ensure your safety. Consideration must be given to the working height, capacity, type, placement and condition of ladder for your work.

CSUF only uses ladders that are rated as ANSI Type IA - Extra Heavy Duty with a minimum 300 lb. work load including the user and their materials and tools.

DO NOT use wood ladders. All wood ladders must be destroyed. Contact the EHS office for assistance.

Purchase only ladders that:
- Are designed, constructed and maintained according to OSHA guidelines and standards
- Have rungs strung between two rails rather than across a single rail.

General Guidelines

Storage and Maintenance:
- Store ladders in well ventilated areas and away from exposure to the elements.
- When stored horizontally, support ladders to avoid sagging and permanent set.
- Clean ladders after exposure to greases, oil, or other slippery substances.
- Do not paint ladders so that it covers cracks or defects.

Use:
- Never use a ladder unless you have been properly trained.
- Always use three points of contact when using ladders (e.g.: two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder).
- Only one person at a time may use or work from a single ladder.
- Always face the ladder when ascending or descending it.
- Use only “trestle ladders” to support planks upon which a person will work.
- Implement separate ladders for ascent and descent when there is significant traffic.
- Ensure that hands and shoes are not greasy, muddy or otherwise slippery.
• Protect the base of ladders in high traffic areas. If you must close an area due to safety concerns, barricade access routes and post alternatives, as appropriate. If you cannot close an area, you must have another employee guard the ladder base.

When placing ladders:
• Place each side rail on a level and firm footing.
• Ensure that the ladder is rigid, stable and secure.
• Keep area around top and bottom of ladder clear of debris, tools and other equipment.
• NEVER support the side rails of ladders with boxes, loose bricks, or other loose packing.
• Ensure that door openings near the ladder are fastened open, locked or guarded.
• Use barricades or guards near passageways, doorways, or driveways.

When using a ladder, NEVER:
• Place planks on top of a stepladder.
• Place tools or supplies on ladders steps if they could fall. Many injuries are caused by falling objects.
• Carry awkward loads while using a ladder. Use ropes to haul heavy items up once you have reached your working height or surface.
• Use metal or wire reinforced ladders around exposed, energized electrical equipment or near electrical conductors. Ladders can provide energy an easy path to ground.
• Join ladders together to form a longer ladder.
• Use a ladder as a guy, brace, tom, strut, beam, skid, or for any other unintended use.
• Stand or work on the top cap or next rung of a step ladder.
• Reach far out from or turn excessively while on a ladder. You risk destabilizing the ladder.
• Lean a ladder on windows, unsecured surfaces, or other unstable support. Your support point must be as stable as your base.

Inspection:
• Before using ladders, inspect them. Only ladders in good condition are to be used.
• EHS will periodically inspect ladders. Ladders not in good, safe condition will immediately be removed from service and destroyed.
• Do not use ladders with broken, weak, or missing components.

When a ladder is broken or has a defect:
• Do not repair it.
• Tag it or mark it as “Dangerous, Do Not Use”.
• Immediately destroy it.

Step Ladders

These are self-supporting ladders with flat steps and hinged backs.
• May be constructed of aluminum or fiberglass.
• Must have a metal spreader in good condition, that locks the ladder open.
• Only use stepladders on a firm and level surface.
• The maximum allowable length for a step ladder is 20 feet.
**Never** use as a straight-type ladder (leaned up against a wall for use), as the footing was not designed for safe use in this manner.

**Never** stand or sit on the top two steps of a step ladder! A longer ladder may be required to safely perform a given task.

### Rolling Ladders

These self-supporting, stair-type ladders exist primarily in warehouse environments but may be found in other areas on campus.
- Use them only where rolling surfaces are smooth and level.
- Be sure to use the handrails and locking devices for added stability.
- Most rolling ladders are constructed of steel, so be aware of conductivity risks when working near electrical equipment.

### Straight/Extension Ladders

These are not self-supporting ladders and come in either single or extendable lengths. The maximum allowable length for a single ladder is **30 feet**, while extension ladders may reach up to **60 feet**.

Place extension ladders so that:
- The horizontal distance from the foot to the structure is one quarter of the ladder’s length.
- They extend 3 feet above the rung on which the person is working.
- Ladders rise at least 3 feet above any landing place.
- Ladders pass through floor openings that are as small as possible.

When securing extension ladders:
- Fix a board to evenly distribute the load, when resting it against a window frame.
- Fix them at the top and foot so that they cannot move.
- When securing a ladder at both the top and bottom is not possible, fix it at the base.
  - If this is not possible, a person should secure it manually to avoid slipping.
- Extension ladders must have a 3 foot overlap with working length of up to 33 feet.
- Extension ladders must have a 4 foot overlap with a working length of 33-44 feet.

When using extension ladders **do not**:
- Stand or work on the top 3 rungs.\(^1\)
- Extend it to exceed 44 feet.

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\(^1\) Use of personal fall protection or the availability of a firm handhold as part of an adjacent structure may provide an exemption to the restriction on the use of the top three rungs. Cal OSHA Consultations made the distinction on this requirement between step and extension ladders.