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TOOLBOX TALK

Ladder Safety

WHY THIS MATTERS

Ladder-related injuries send over 500,000 people to the hospital every year. Falls from ladders account for 20% of all fall fatalities in construction. Most ladder accidents are caused by improper setup, wrong ladder selection, or unsafe climbing practices.

500K
Ladder injuries per year worldwide

20%
Of fall deaths caused by ladder incidents

100%
Ladder accidents are preventable

4 Rules of Ladder Safety

Follow these four rules every time you use a ladder:

1. **RIGHT LADDER FOR THE JOB**
   Match the ladder type and duty rating to the task. Never exceed the weight capacity.

2. **INSPECT BEFORE EVERY USE**
   Check rungs, rails, feet, locks, and labels. Remove damaged ladders from service immediately.

3. **SET UP ON STABLE GROUND**
   Level, firm surface only. Use the 4-to-1 rule: 1 foot out for every 4 feet of height.

4. **MAINTAIN 3 POINTS OF CONTACT**
   Two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder at all times while climbing.

Before You Climb — Quick Checklist

- [ ] Is this the right type and size of ladder for the job?
- [ ] Has the ladder been inspected for damage before use?
- [ ] Is the ladder set up on a firm, level surface?
- [ ] Is the 4-to-1 angle rule being followed for extension ladders?
- [ ] Does the ladder extend at least 3 feet above the landing point?
- [ ] Is the area around the base and top of the ladder clear?

Ladder Inspection — Before Every Use

Rungs:	Check every rung for cracks, bends, corrosion, or looseness. Must be evenly spaced.
Side rails:	Inspect for dents, bends, cracks, or split rails. Must be straight and structurally sound.
Feet/Pads:	Verify non-slip feet are intact and clean. Replace if worn, missing, or damaged.
Locks/Hinges:	Test spreader locks on stepladders. Must lock fully open. Check rung locks on extensions.
Labels:	Duty rating label must be legible. Remove from service if label is missing or unreadable.
Hardware:	Check all bolts, rivets, and screws. Tighten or replace any loose or missing hardware.

Common Mistakes That Kill

- ✗ Using the top two rungs of a stepladder — these are NOT steps, you will lose balance
- ✗ Placing ladder on uneven or soft ground — the ladder will shift and fall
- ✗ Overreaching instead of moving the ladder — lean no more than one arm's length
- ✗ Using a metal ladder near electrical wires — use fiberglass ladders near electricity
- ✗ Carrying heavy tools while climbing — use a tool belt or hoist tools with a rope

Safety Tips to Remember

- ✓ Face the ladder while climbing — never climb facing away from the rungs
- ✓ 3 points of contact at ALL times — two hands one foot, or two feet one hand
- ✓ Move the ladder, don't overreach — if you can't reach it safely, reposition
- ✓ One person on a ladder at a time — never have two people on the same ladder
- ✓ Secure the top and bottom — tie off or have someone hold the base steady

Discussion Questions for Your Team

1. What type of ladders do we use on this job site?
2. When was the last time you inspected your ladder before climbing?
3. Can you explain the 4-to-1 rule for setting up extension ladders?
4. What would you do if you found a damaged ladder on site?
5. Are there situations where we should use scaffolding instead of a ladder?

TOOLBOX TALK SIGN-OFF

Date: _____ Supervisor: _____

Project: _____ Location: _____

Attendance sheet attached: [ ] Yes