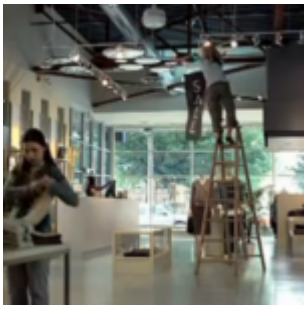
Ladder Safety Is an Issue in Many Workplaces



On June 16, the Chief Prevention Officer in Ontario issued a ladder safety advisory. It notes that falls from ladders can be dangerous and are common to virtually all types of workplaces. In addition, the misuse of ladders can result in falls, musculoskeletal disorders or even electrical contact.

In fact, just a few days before the release of this advisory, the Ontario Ministry of Labour issued a press release on a guilty plea in a ladder incident.

A worker was cleaning and painting support beams at a manufacturing facility while standing on a ladder propped against a wall. When a co-worker started moving an overhead crane along the perimeter of the building, it knocked the worker off the ladder and to the concrete floor below, causing lacerations and bruises. The manufacturer pleaded guilty to and OHS violation and was fined $50,000 [*General Kinetics Engineering Corp.*, Govt. News Release, June 12, 2014].

So what should you do to keep workers safe when using ladders on the job’

First, make sure that your workplace complies with the requirements for portable ladders in the OHS laws.

Then make sure to train workers on ladder safety and ensure that they understand:

- That step and extension ladders aren't interchangeable
- How to use step ladders and extension ladders safely
- How to inspect ladders to ensure that they're not damaged, broken or otherwise unsafe
- Not to use metal ladders near power lines.

You should also consider using the NIOSH Ladder Safety phone app, which has an angle of inclination indicator that uses visual and audible signals to make it easier for workers to set an extension ladder at the proper angle.

And the MOL recommends that workers ask these questions before working from a ladder:

- Is a ladder the safest means of doing the work'
- Would a scaffold or other work platform be safer'
- Has your supervisor explained what the hazards are and how to do the work safely'
- Do you understand the hazards'
- Have you been adequately trained'
- Do you have proper fall protection equipment if required'
- Are rescue procedures in place'