

Spot The Safety Violation: Creative But Dangerous



Wouldn't a taller ladder or different piece of equipment be a safer choice'

Although you might encourage workers to think outside the box when it comes to problem-solving on the job, it might be better if they took more traditional approaches when their safety is at risk.

This picture from the US Naval Safety Center shows a worker who creatively but unsafely erected a step ladder on the roof of a van. The better approach would've been to find a taller ladder or use a different piece of equipment, such as a boom or scissor lift or a [scaffold](#).

To make the situation even more dangerous, the worker isn't wearing any [fall prevention equipment](#). And if he should fall and land on either the vehicle or the ground, he could be seriously injured if not killed.

Answer 10 Questions on Step Ladders

Your workplace must comply with [the portable ladder safety requirements](#) under the OHS laws in your jurisdiction. To do so, workers must properly use this equipment. So instruct workers that, when they set up a step ladder, they should answer the following questions:

1. Is the step ladder on a flat, stable and hard surface' (Step ladders *shouldn't* be set up on other elevated surfaces, such as the roof of the van in this picture.)
2. Are all four feet touching the ground so that it doesn't rock'
3. Is the surface hard enough to prevent it from creeping and settling once it's loaded'
4. Is the bottom of the ladder clear of loose materials that can create a trip or slip hazard when stepping on/off the ladder'
5. Is the ladder clear of any doors that can swing open and hit it'
6. Are both spreaders that create the A-frame of the ladder fully engaged and locked'

7. If the ladder's being used in a public area, is the work area marked off to warn passing individuals'
8. Is the setup clear of any electrical hazards, such as [overhead power lines](#)'
9. Is the ladder clean of loose debris and dry'
10. Is it free of anything that could increase the risk of slipping on the rungs'

Workers should also inspect all ladders *before* using them to make sure they're not defective in any way. (Download this [ladder inspection form](#).)

And supervisors can use this [step ladder safety checklist](#) to ensure that workers are properly setting up, moving on and working from step ladders.