

Spot The Safety Violation: Just One Slip...



What's preventing these extension ladders from slipping off the very narrow scaffold platform'



Ladders and scaffolds are both tools that workers can use to reach elevated areas. But such equipment must be used properly—and may not be able to be used together safely.

In this picture, two extension ladders have been set up on top of a scaffold's platform. But that "platform" appears to be just a single, fairly narrow board. And there doesn't seem to be anything in place to keep the ladders from slipping off the edge of this board, which would be disastrous for the worker climbing the one ladder.

Adding to the hazards, if the ladder should slip, it doesn't look like the worker on it is wearing any [fall protection equipment](#).

Protect Workers on Ladders

To keep workers safe when they use extension and step ladders on the job, ensure that your workplace complies with the [requirements for portable ladders](#) in the OHS laws. And train workers on ladder safety to [ensure that they understand](#):

- [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](#).

Ensure Safe Use of Scaffolds

Also, ensure that workers use scaffolds properly. You can generally [comply with the scaffold requirements](#) in your jurisdiction's OHS laws by doing the following:

- Determine if a scaffold is required;
- Select the appropriate type of scaffold, such as a bracket scaffold, single-pole scaffold or rolling scaffold;
- Ensure the selected scaffold—including its platforms—is properly designed and constructed. In some cases, you may need to have it designed by a professional engineer;
- Ensure the scaffold can carry the load or weight expected to be placed on it by workers, tools, materials and other equipment;
- Safely locate the scaffold, such as by placing it on flat, level ground and away from [overhead power lines](#);
- Inspect the scaffold *before* workers use it (An engineer or someone considered a “competent” person can do so using this [inspection checklist](#).); and
- Set safe work practices, including requiring workers to wear proper [fall protection](#) while on a scaffold and when required by your OHS regulations.