

Spot The Safety Violation: Step Ladder Dos & Don'ts



What in the world is this worker thinking, standing on a step ladder in this manner'

Considering how common ladders are in many workplaces and how relatively easy they are to use, you'd think that workers would be better at using this equipment safely. But as the number of Spot the Safety Violations that we've done on

ladders shows, workers continually underestimate the dangers of using ladders unsafely and take unnecessary risks on this equipment.

For example, this picture shows a worker standing on the top cap of a step ladder, which isn't intended to be stood or sat on by workers. To make the situation even more hazardous, his one foot isn't even completely on the top cap and his other foot is on the handrail!

STEP LADDER DOS & DON'TS

Ensure your workplace is compliant with the [requirements under the OHS laws for portable ladders](#), such as [step ladders](#) and [extension ladders](#). And it's critical that you train workers who use ladders on these requirements and how to safely use this equipment. (Give workers [this quiz](#) to ensure that they understood this training.)

For example, when using step ladders, make sure that workers **DO**:

1. Inspect ladders before using them to ensure that they're in good condition (see, [ladder inspection form](#)).
2. Try to maintain three points of contact with the ladder at all times.
3. Carry tools in a tool belt or raise and lower them with a hand line.
4. Ensure that their [shoes/boots](#) are clean and have slip-free soles.
5. Face the ladder and stand in the centre of the side rails.
6. Secure the ladder from moving or have a co-worker hold it.
7. Ensure the legs of the step ladder are fully extended and locked in place.

And make sure that workers **DON'T**:

1. Work from the top two rungs, steps or cleats, the [top cap](#) or the bucket/pail shelf of a portable ladder unless the manufacturer's specifications allow such use.
2. Carry heavy or bulky objects or any other object that may make going up or down the ladder unsafe.
3. Exceed the ladder's load limits with themselves, their tools and their materials.
4. Splice or lash ladders together to extend their length.
5. Place ladders in front of or against a door, unless the door is blocked in the open position, locked or otherwise guarded.
6. Use a ladder as scaffold flooring, support for scaffold flooring or a horizontal walkway.
7. Place a ladder on a box, barrel or other unstable base.
8. Move a ladder while someone is on it.

In addition, have supervisors use this [step ladder safety checklist](#) to ensure that workers properly set up, move on and work from step ladders.