

Spot The Safety Violation: Two Ladders Aren't Better than One



If one ladder is good, two must be even better, right'



Sometimes you just have to wonder what in the world this worker was thinking!

This picture from the US Naval Safety Center shows a worker incorrectly using not one but two step ladders. It's unclear why the worker couldn't have stood on one of the ladders' opened and in the correct position' to do his job safely.

To make matters worse, should the worker fall from his precarious position, he's at risk of also tumbling off the balcony he's working on, which doesn't have any guardrails. (And he's not wearing any fall protection.)

10 Step Ladder Questions

It's important that you ensure that your workplace complies with the ladder safety requirements under the OHS laws in your jurisdiction. To that end, you need the cooperation of the workers using 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 need to be on flat surfaces and shouldn't be set up on other elevated platforms,

such as was done 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.