

Step Ladders – Know The Laws of Your Province



Step ladders are commonly used in various workplaces for tasks that require short-term access to elevated areas. While convenient, they present significant risks when not properly selected, maintained, or used according to safety standards. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulations in Canada set clear requirements for the safe use of step ladders to prevent falls, strains, and other related injuries. Employers are responsible for ensuring that step ladders are the correct type and height for the job, are inspected regularly, and are in good working condition. While general ladder safety principles apply across Canada, specific OHS regulations vary by province and territory to address unique industry risks and environmental conditions. Compliance with these regulations minimizes the risk of workplace injuries, promotes safe ladder use, and ensures a secure working environment for all personnel using step ladders.

FEDERAL

In federally regulated workplaces across Canada, the safe use of **step ladders** is governed under the **Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations – Part III Temporary Structures and Excavations, Section 3.11**. This section outlines the responsibilities of **employers** to ensure that ladders, including step ladders, are constructed, maintained, and used in a manner that prevents accidents and injuries.

Portable Ladders

- (1) Commercially manufactured portable ladders **shall** meet the standards set out in CSA Standard CAN3-Z11-M81, *Portable Ladders*, the English version of which is dated September, 1981, as amended to March, 1983 and the French version of which is dated August, 1982, as amended to June, 1983.
- (2) Subject to subsection (3), every portable ladder **shall**, while being used,
 - (a) be placed on a firm footing; and
 - (b) be secured in such a manner that it cannot be dislodged accidentally from its position.
- (3) Where, because of the nature of the location or of the work being done, a portable ladder cannot be securely fastened in place, it **shall**, while being used, be sloped so that the base of the ladder is not less than one-quarter and not more than one-third of the length of the ladder from a point directly below the top of the ladder and at the same level as the base.
- (4) Every portable ladder that provides access from one level to another **shall** extend at least three rungs above the higher level.
- (5) Metal or wire-bound portable ladders **shall** not be used if there is a risk that they could come into contact with any live electrical circuit or equipment.
- (6) No employee **shall** work from any of the three top rungs of any single or extension portable ladder or from either of the two top steps of any portable step ladder. **Section 3.11 (1) to (6).**

Further details on the Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations can be found at Justice.gc.ca.

ALBERTA

In Alberta, the safe use of **step ladders** is regulated under the **Occupational Health and Safety Code – Part 8: Entrances, Walkways, Stairways and Ladders, Sections 124, 125, 133, to 136**. These provisions establish the requirements for ladder design, maintenance, placement, and use to prevent injuries associated with falls or ladder failure.

Ladders – General

Restriction on Use

An **employer must** ensure that workers do not use a ladder to enter or leave an elevated or sublevel work area if the area has another safe and recognizable way to enter or leave it. **Section 124.**

Prohibition on Single Rail

A person **must** not make a ladder by fastening cleats across a single rail or post. **Section 125.**

Portable Ladders

Prohibition

- (1) A worker **must** not perform work from either of the top 2 rungs, steps or cleats of a portable ladder unless the manufacturer's specifications allow the worker to do so.
- (2) Despite subsection (1), a worker may work from either of the top 2 rungs, steps, or treads of a stepladder,
 - (a) if the stepladder has a railed platform at the top, or
 - (b) if the manufacturer's specifications for the stepladder permit it. **Section 133 (1)(2).**

Constructed Portable Ladder

- (1) An **employer must** ensure that a constructed portable ladder:

- (a) is constructed of lumber that is free of loose knots or knot holes,
- (b) with a length of 5 metres or less has side rails constructed of lumber measuring not less than 38 millimetres by 89 millimetres,
- (c) more than 5 metres long has side rails constructed of lumber measuring not less than 38 millimetres by 140 millimetres,
- (d) has side rails that are not notched, dapped, tapered or spliced,
- (e) has side rails at least 500 millimetres apart at the bottom, and
- (f) has rungs that are:
 - (i) constructed of lumber measuring not less than 21 millimetres by 89 millimetres,
 - (ii) held by filler blocks or secured by a single continuous wire, and
 - (iii) uniformly spaced at a centretocentre distance of 250 millimetres to 300 millimetres.

(2) An **employer must** ensure that a two way constructed portable ladder that is wide enough to permit traffic in both directions at the same time,

- (a) has a centre structural rail along the length of the ladder,
- (b) is at least 1 metre wide, and
- (c) is constructed of materials that are substantial enough in size to accommodate the maximum intended load. **Section 134(1)(2).**

Manufactured Portable Ladder

An **employer must** ensure that a portable ladder manufactured on or after July 1, 2009 meets the requirements of:

- (a) CSA Standard CAN3 Z11M81 (R2005), *Portable Ladders*,
- (b) ANSI Standard A14.12007, *American National Standard for*

Ladders – Wood Safety Requirements,
(c) ANSI Standard A14.22007, *American National Standard for Ladders – Portable Metal – Safety Requirements*, or
(d) ANSI Standard A14.52007, *American National Standard for Ladders – Portable Reinforced Plastic – Safety Requirements*. **Section 135.**

Securing and Positioning

A worker **must** ensure that:

- (a) a portable ladder is secured against movement and placed on a base that is stable,
- (b) the base of an inclined portable ladder is no further from the base of the wall or structure than 1/4 of the distance between the base of the ladder and the place where the ladder contacts the wall, and
- (c) the side rails of a portable ladder extend at least 1 metre above a platform, landing or parapet if the ladder is used as a means of access to the platform, landing or parapet. **Section 136.**

Further details on the Occupational Health And Safety Code can be found Alberta.ca.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

In British Columbia, the safe use of **step ladders** is regulated under the **Occupational Health and Safety Regulation – Part 13: Ladders, Scaffolds and Temporary Work Platforms, Sections 13.4 to 13.6**. These sections outline essential requirements for the proper selection, inspection, and use of ladders, including step ladders, to reduce the risk of falls and related injuries.

Manufactured Ladders

A manufactured portable ladder **must** be marked for the grade of material used to construct the ladder and the use for which

the ladder is constructed. **Section 13.4.**

Position and Stability

(1) A portable ladder **must**:

- (a) be placed on a firm and level surface, and
- (b) be of sufficient length to enable the safe performance of the work activity while being used.

(2) A portable non-self-supporting ladder **must**,

- (a) as shown in Figure 13-1, be positioned so that the ladder is leaning against the vertical plane of support at an approximate angle of 75° when measured from the horizontal plane of support,
- (b) if the ladder provides access to or egress from an upper landing,

- (i) project approximately 1 m (3 ft) above the upper landing, and
 - (ii) be sufficiently secured in place to ensure the stability of the ladder during access to or egress from the upper landing, and

- (c) if the ladder is not already secured in accordance with paragraph (b)(ii), be sufficiently secured in place to ensure the stability of the ladder during use if conditions exist that are likely to cause the ladder to be unstable.

Section 13.5.



Figure 13-1: Ladder Angle

Use Restrictions

- (1) If work cannot be done from a ladder without hazard to a worker, a work platform **must** be provided.
- (2) A worker **must** not carry up or down a ladder, heavy or

bulky objects or any other objects which may make ascent or descent unsafe. **Section 13.6.**

Further details on the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation can be found at WorksafeBC.com.

MANITOBA

In Manitoba, the safe use of **step ladders** is regulated under the [Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation – Part 13: Entrances, Exits, Stairways, and Ladders, Sections 13.7, 13.8, 13.11, and 13.16 to 13.19](#). These sections establish essential requirements for the design, inspection, and proper use of ladders, including step ladders, to prevent falls and other workplace injuries.

LADDERS – GENERAL

Loads

Every ladder provided by an **employer** for use at a workplace **must** be designed and constructed and maintained to safely support any load that will be or is likely to be imposed on it. **Section 13.7.**

Worker to Inspect Ladder

An **employer must** ensure that a worker inspects a ladder for defects prior to each use. A ladder found to be broken or defective may not be used until it has been repaired and restored to its original design specifications. **Section 13.8.**

PORTABLE LADDERS

Commercially Manufactured Portable Ladder

An **employer must** ensure that a commercially manufactured portable ladder used at a workplace:

- (a) complies with the applicable requirements of the

following standards:

- (i) CSA Z11-18, Portable Ladders,
- (ii) ANSI-ASC A14.1-2017, American National Standard for Ladders – Wood – Safety Requirements,
- (iii) ANSI-ASC A14.2-2017, American National Standard for Ladders – Portable Metal – Safety Requirements,
- (iv) ANSI-ASC A14.5-2017, American National Standard for Ladders – Portable Reinforced Plastic – Safety Requirements; and

(b) is used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and safe operating instructions **Section 13.11**.

Portable Ladders

- (1) When in use at a workplace, an **employer must** ensure that a portable ladder is secured against movement at all times during use and is placed on a stable, level base.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (1), an **employer must** ensure that:

- (a) where a portable ladder is used as a means of access to a platform, roof or other landing, it extends at least one metre above the platform, roof or other landing; and
- (b) for a portable ladder other than a stepladder, it is placed against a structure so that the slope of the ladder is no more than 1:4. **Section 13.16 (1)(2)**.

Stepladders

An **employer must** ensure that a stepladder:

- (a) is not more than 6 m high when set for use; and
- (b) has legs that are securely held in position by metal braces or an equivalent rigid support. **Section 13.17**.

Workers Using Portable Ladder

An **employer must** ensure that a worker using:

- (a) a stepladder or other commercially manufactured portable ladder does so in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and safe operating instructions; and
- (b) a portable ladder other than a stepladder
 - (i) does not extend any part of his or her body, except his or her arms, beyond the side rails of the ladder, and
 - (ii) maintains a three-point contact on the ladder at all times. **Section 13.18.**

Prohibitions re: Use of Portable Ladder

An **employer must** ensure that a worker does not perform work from either of the top two rungs, steps or cleats of:

- (a) a portable ladder other than a stepladder unless the manufacturer's specifications for the ladder permit it; or
- (b) a stepladder, unless
 - (i) it has a railed platform at the top, or
 - (ii) the manufacturer's specifications for the stepladder permit it. **Section 13.19.**

Further details on the Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation can be found at Gov.MB.ca.

NEW BRUNSWICK

In New Brunswick, the safe use of **step ladders** is addressed under the **General Regulation – Part XI Temporary Structures, Sections 122, and 124 to 126**. These provisions outline the minimum safety requirements for the use, condition, and placement of ladders, including step ladders, to prevent falls and ensure worker safety.

Portable Ladder – General Requirements

(1) An **employer shall** ensure that a portable ladder used at a place of employment is:

- (a) of adequate strength and length,
- (b) clean and free of grease, and
- (c) maintained in a safe condition.

Defects in Portable Ladder

(2) An **employer shall** ensure that a portable ladder is removed from service when it has loose, broken or missing rungs, split side rails, or other defects that may be hazardous to the safety of an employee. **Section 122 (1)(2).**

Portable Ladder

(1) An **employer shall** ensure that a portable ladder complies with and is used in accordance with either of the following standards:

- (a) CSA standard Z11-12 (R2017), *Portable ladders* or a standard offering equivalent or better protection; or
- (b) ANSI standard ANSI ASC A-14.7-2011, *Safety Requirements for Mobile Ladder Stands and Mobile Ladder Stand Platforms* or a standard offering equivalent or better protection.

(2) An **employer shall** ensure that a portable extension ladder:

- (a) has no more than three sections,
- (b) has locks that securely hold the sections of the ladder in an extended position, and
- (c) when extended, maintains a minimum overlap as follows:
 - (i) where the ladder is 11 m or less, the overlap **shall** be 1 m;
 - (ii) where the ladder exceeds 11 m and is 15 m or less, the overlap **shall** be 1.25 m; and

(iii) where the ladder exceeds 15 m and is 22 m or less, the overlap **shall** be 1.5 m.

(3) An employee working 3 m or more above the ground or floor level on a portable ladder may work without a fall-protection system if:

- (a) the work is a light duty task of short duration at each location,
- (b) the employee's centre of gravity is maintained between the two ladder side rails,
- (c) the employee will generally have one hand available to hold on to the ladder or another support, and
- (d) the ladder is not positioned near an edge or floor opening that would significantly increase the potential fall distance. **Section 124 (1) to (3).**

Employee Responsibilities – Use of Portable Ladder

(1) An employee who uses a portable ladder **shall**:

- (a) inspect the ladder before use,
- (b) report any unsafe condition of the ladder to the **employer**,
- (c) face the ladder and use both hands when climbing or descending, and
- (d) when standing on a ladder, stand in the centre between the side rails.

(2) An employee who uses a portable ladder **shall** ensure that:

- (a) the ladder is secured against movement,
- (b) the side rails of the ladder extend at least 1 m above any platform or landing to which the ladder is a means of access, and
- (c) if a step ladder, the legs are securely held in position by means of metal braces or an equivalent rigid support.

(3) An employee who uses a portable ladder **shall** not:

- (a) splice ladders together unless the spliced section is braced so that the spliced side rails are as strong as the original side rails,
- (b) place a ladder in front of or against a door unless the door is blocked in the open position, locked or guarded,
- (c) use a ladder as scaffold flooring or as support for scaffold flooring,
- (d) stand on the material shelf, the top or the top step of a portable step ladder, or
- (e) work from the top three rungs of a portable single or extension ladder.

(4) Paragraphs (1)(d) and (3)(c) and (e) do not apply to a firefighter engaged in structural fire-fighting or rescue.

Section 125 (1) to (4).

Use of Portable Ladder Near Energized Electrical Source

Where an employee is using a portable ladder and is working close to an energized electrical utility line or utility line equipment, the **employer** and the employee **shall** each comply with the appropriate provisions of Part XIX. **Section 126.**

Further details on the General Regulation can be found at GNB.ca.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the safe use of **step ladders** is addressed under the **Occupational Health and Safety Regulations – Part XI: Scaffolds, Stages and Work Platforms, Sections 148, 151, 152, and 154**. These sections outline essential safety requirements for the use, condition, and stability of ladders to prevent falls and injuries during work at height.

Portable Ladder Standards

(1) Except as otherwise permitted by this Part, portable ladder design, construction and use **shall** meet the requirements of:

- (a) CSA Standard CAN3-Z11 "Portable Ladders";
- (b) ANSI Standard A14.1-1990 "Safety Requirements for Portable Wood Ladders";
- (c) ANSI Standard A14.2-1990 "Safety Requirements for Portable Metal Ladders"; or
- (d) other standard acceptable to the minister.

(2) A manufactured portable ladder **shall** be:

- (a) marked for grade and use; and
- (b) used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. **Section 148.**

Inspection

Portable ladders **shall** be inspected before use, and ladders with loose, broken or missing rungs, split side rails or other hazardous defects **shall** be removed from service. **Section 151.**

Inclination and Support

Where a portable single or extension ladder is in use:

- (a) the ladder **shall** be placed so that the horizontal distance from the base to the vertical plane of support is approximately one-quarter of the ladder length between supports; and
- (b) the lower ends of the ladder side rails **shall** rest on a firm and level base and the upper support of the side rails **shall** be rested on a bearing surface strong enough to safely withstand the applied load. **Section 152.**

Restrictions on Use

(1) Except as otherwise permitted by a manufacturer, a worker **shall** not work from either the top 2 rungs of a portable

single or extension ladder or the top 2 steps of a stepladder.

(2) A ladder **shall** not be used as a scaffold component or as a horizontal walkway, ramp or work platform support except where the ladder is part of a pre-manufactured or engineered system.

(3) A worker **shall** maintain 3 points of contact when using a ladder.

(4) A worker may only work from a portable ladder without fall protection where:

(a) the work is a light duty task of short duration at each location;

(b) the worker's centre of gravity is maintained between the ladder side rails; and

(c) the ladder is not positioned near an edge or floor opening that would significantly increase the potential fall distance. **Section 154 (1) to (3)**.

Further details on the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations can be found at Assembly.NL.ca.

NOVA SCOTIA

In Nova Scotia, the safe use of **step ladders** in excavation and trenching work is addressed under the [**Occupational Safety General Regulations – Part 14: Excavations and Trenches, Sections 147 to 152**](#). These sections outline safety requirements for accessing and working within excavations, where ladders are commonly used as means of entry and exit.

Ladders

An **employer shall** ensure that a fixed ladder is designed, constructed, installed and maintained in accordance with the latest version of ANSI standard ANSI A14.3 “American National Standard for Ladders – Fixed – Safety Requirements”. **Section 147**.

(1) An **employer shall** ensure that a portable ladder used at a workplace is:

- (a) able to withstand 4 times the maximum load likely to be imposed;
- (b) clean and free of grease, oil or other substances that may cause slipping;
- (c) maintained in a safe condition;
- (d) inspected at all of the following times by a competent person to ensure all components are in an adequate condition and the ladder is safe to use
 - (i) before each use,
 - (ii) annually;
- (e) not used, where the inspection **required** in clause (d) identifies an inadequate condition with the ladder.

(2) An **employer shall** ensure that a person using a fixed or portable ladder **shall**:

- (a) face the ladder when climbing or descending;
- (b) when more than 1 m above a safe surface, maintain adequate contact with the ladder, such as 3-point contact;
- (c) where the person is standing on a ladder, stand in the centre between the side rails;
- (d) where the ladder is a step ladder, not stand on the material shelf, the top or the top step of the ladder; and
- (e) where the ladder is not a step ladder, not work from the top three rungs of the ladder.

(3) Clauses (2)(b), (c), (d), and (e) do not apply to a firefighter engaged in structural firefighting or rescue.

(4) An **employer shall** remove a ladder from service when it has loose, broken or missing rungs, split side rails or other defects that may be hazardous to the safety of a person at the workplace. **Section 148 (1) to (4).**

(1) An **employer shall** ensure that a wooden portable ladder that is not commercially manufactured:

- (a) is made of No. 1 or No. 2 spruce, pine, or fir as graded according to the latest version of CSA standard CSA 0141, "Softwood Lumber", or other lumber that provides an equivalent level of safety;
- (b) is not painted other than by being preserved with a transparent protective coating;
- (c) if a single ladder, does not exceed 9 m in length;
- (d) has rungs that are
 - (i) free of knots,
 - (ii) designed to carry a load of 200 kg placed at the centre,
 - (iii) uniformly spaced with a maximum rise of 300 mm,
 - (iv) secured to each side of the side rail of the ladder by at least 3 screws or spiral nails of adequate length or by attachments giving equivalent or better strength, and
 - (v) subject to subsection (3), cleated to the side rails; and

(e) has side rails that

- (i) are dressed on all sides and without sharp edges,
- (ii) subject to subsection (3), have a uniform clear width between them of not less than 300 mm for ladders 3 m in length or less, and increasing 1 mm in width for each 100 mm in excess of 3 m,
- (iii) where the ladder is less than 5.7 m in length, have dimensions of at least 50 mm thick by at least 100 mm wide, and
- (iv) subject to subsection (3), where the ladder is 5.7 m or greater in length, have dimensions of at least 50 mm thick by at least 150 mm wide.

(2) An **employer shall** ensure that a ladder does not sway or

sag in an unsafe manner.

(3) An **employer shall** ensure that a portable ladder that is designed specifically for the purpose of harvesting fruit from trees and is used only for that purpose, is erected, constructed, maintained and used so as to be adequate for that purpose.

(4) Subclause (1)(d)(v) and subclauses (1)(e)(ii) and (iv) do not apply to a ladder that conforms to the requirements of subsection (3). **Section 149 (1) to (4).**

(1) An **employer shall** ensure that a portable ladder that is commercially manufactured is designed, manufactured and maintained in accordance with the latest version of CSA standard Z11, "Portable Ladders".

(2) Despite subsection (1), an **employer shall** ensure that Grade 3 portable ladders, as described in any edition of CSA standard CSA Z11, "Portable Ladders", are not used at a workplace.

(3) An **employer shall** ensure that a commercially manufactured portable ladder:

- (a) where it is an extension ladder, maintains an adequate overlap between the sections of the ladder;
- (b) has locks engaged before the extension ladder is climbed; and
- (c) where there is a risk of contact with live electrical conductors, is non-conductive. **Section 150 (1) to (3).**

For more information:

- Requirements of employer is use of portable ladders.
Sections 151, 152.

Further details on the Occupational Safety General Regulations can be found at Novascotia.ca.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES & NUNAVUT

In the Northwest Territories, the safe use of **step ladders** is addressed under the **Occupational Health and Safety Regulations** – **Part 16: Entrances, Exits, and Ladders, Sections 258 to 260**. These sections outline general requirements for all ladder types, including step ladders, to ensure safe access and egress in the workplace and reduce the risk of falls and related injuries.

Ladders

- (1) An **employer** or supplier **shall** ensure that a ladder at a work site is designed, constructed and used to safely perform its function and is maintained.
- (2) An **employer** or supplier **shall** ensure that:
 - (a) a wooden ladder or stepladder is not painted with a substance other than a transparent coating; and
 - (b) a ladder is not made by fastening cleats across a single rail or post. **Section 258**.

Portable Ladders

- (1) In this section and section 260, “portable ladder” means a ladder that is not fixed in place, and includes a stepladder.
- (2) An **employer** **shall** ensure that a portable ladder:
 - (a) is equipped with non-slip feet;
 - (b) is secured against accidental movement during use;
 - (c) that is metal or wire-bound is not used if the ladder or a worker handling or using the ladder could come into contact with an exposed energized conductor; and
 - (d) extends not less than 1 m above a platform, roof or other landing to which the ladder is used as a means of access.
- (3) An **employer** **shall** ensure that each worker who handles or uses a portable ladder is instructed in the requirements of

this section.

(4) An **employer shall** ensure that a stepladder:

- (a) is not more than 6 m high when set for use;
- (b) has legs that are securely held in position by means of metal braces or an equivalent rigid support; and
- (c) when in use, has a front section slope at an angle of one horizontal to six vertical.

(5) An **employer shall** ensure that:

- (a) an extension ladder is equipped with locks that securely hold the sections of the ladder in the extended position;
- (b) if a section of an extension ladder is extended, the section that is extended overlaps another section for not less than 1 m;
- (c) an extension ladder consisting of two sections does not exceed 14.6 m in length; and
- (d) an extension ladder consisting of more than two sections does not exceed 20 m in length.

(6) An **employer shall** ensure that none of the following exceeds 9 m in length:

- (a) a single portable ladder;
- (b) any section of an extension ladder. **Section 259 (1) to (6).**

Use of Portable Ladders

(1) If a worker uses a portable ladder other than a stepladder, an **employer shall** ensure that:

- (a) the ladder is placed against the structure so that the slope of the ladder is one horizontal to four vertical;
- (b) the worker does not extend any part of their body other than their arms beyond the side rails of the ladder;
- (c) the worker maintains a three-point stance on the

ladder; and

(d) the ladder is anchored to prevent movement:

(i) at its base, and

(ii) at its upper points of support.

(2) An **employer shall** ensure that a worker does not work from either of the top two rungs or steps of a portable ladder, unless the ladder is a stepladder that has a platform equipped with a suitable handrail. **Section 260 (1)(2)**.

Further details on the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations can be found at Canlii.org.

NUNAVUT

In Nunavut, the safe use of **step ladders** is addressed under the **Occupational Health and Safety Regulations – Part 16: Entrances, Exits, and Ladders, Sections 258 to 260**. These sections outline general requirements for all ladder types, including step ladders, to ensure safe access and egress in the workplace and reduce the risk of falls and related injuries.

Ladders

(1) An **employer** or supplier **shall** ensure that a ladder at a work site is designed, constructed and used to safely perform its function and is maintained.

(2) An **employer** or supplier **shall** ensure that:

(a) a wooden ladder or stepladder is not painted with a substance other than a transparent coating; and

(b) a ladder is not made by fastening cleats across a single rail or post. **Section 258**.

Portable Ladders

(1) In this section and section 260, “portable ladder” means a

ladder that is not fixed in place, and includes a stepladder.

(2) An **employer shall** ensure that a portable ladder:

- (a) is equipped with non-slip feet;
- (b) is secured against accidental movement during use;
- (c) that is metal or wire-bound is not used if the ladder or a worker handling or using the ladder could come into contact with an exposed energized conductor; and
- (d) extends not less than 1 m above a platform, roof or other landing to which the ladder is used as a means of access.

(3) An **employer shall** ensure that each worker who handles or uses a portable ladder is instructed in the requirements of this section.

(4) An **employer shall** ensure that a stepladder:

- (a) is not more than 6 m high when set for use;
- (b) has legs that are securely held in position by means of metal braces or an equivalent rigid support; and
- (c) when in use, has a front section slope at an angle of one horizontal to six vertical.

(5) An **employer shall** ensure that:

- (a) an extension ladder is equipped with locks that securely hold the sections of the ladder in the extended position;
- (b) if a section of an extension ladder is extended, the section that is extended overlaps another section for not less than 1 m;
- (c) an extension ladder consisting of two sections does not exceed 14.6 m in length; and
- (d) an extension ladder consisting of more than two sections does not exceed 20 m in length.

(6) An **employer shall** ensure that none of the following exceeds 9 m in length:

- (a) a single portable ladder;
- (b) any section of an extension ladder. **Section 259 (1) to (6).**

Use of Portable Ladders

(1) If a worker uses a portable ladder other than a stepladder, an **employer shall** ensure that:

- (a) the ladder is placed against the structure so that the slope of the ladder is one horizontal to four vertical;
- (b) the worker does not extend any part of their body other than their arms beyond the side rails of the ladder;
- (c) the worker maintains a three-point stance on the ladder; and
- (d) the ladder is anchored to prevent movement:
 - (i) at its base, and
 - (ii) at its upper points of support.

(2) An **employer shall** ensure that a worker does not work from either of the top two rungs or steps of a portable ladder, unless the ladder is a stepladder that has a platform equipped with a suitable handrail. **Section 260 (1)(2).**

Further details on the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations can be found at [Canlii.org](https://canlii.org).

ONTARIO

In Ontario, the safe use of **step ladders** on construction sites is regulated under **[O. Reg. 213/91: Construction Projects – Part II: General Construction, Sections 79 to 84](https://canlii.org/r/o-reg-213-91)**. These sections outline key requirements for the selection, inspection, positioning, and use of ladders, including step ladders, to prevent falls and ensure worker safety.

Ladders

A ladder **shall** be designed, constructed and maintained so as not to endanger a worker and **shall** be capable of withstanding all loads to which it may be subjected. **Section 79.**

- (1) A portable ladder at a project **shall** be manufactured and **shall** meet the design, performance, test and marking requirements of a Grade 1, Grade 1A or Grade 1AA ladder in the CSA Standard Z11-12, Portable Ladders.
- (2) Despite subsection (1), a portable single ladder that is custom-built for use at a project may be used at the project if the ladder has,
 - (a) rungs spaced at 300 millimetres on centres;
 - (b) side rails at least 300 millimetres apart; and
 - (c) a maximum length, measured along its side rail, of not more than nine metres.
- (3) If a portable single ladder under subsection (2) is made of wood, the ladder **shall** also,
 - (a) be made of wood that is straight-grained and free of loose knots, sharp edges, splinters and shakes; and
 - (b) not be painted or coated with an opaque material that obscures the wood grain or interferes with inspections of the ladder.
- (4) If the rungs of a ladder under subsection (3) are of the cleat type, the ladder **shall** also,
 - (a) have side rails that are not less than 400 millimetres but not more than 610 millimetres apart;
 - (b) have side rails that measure not less than,
 - (i) 38 millimetres by 89 millimetres if the ladder is 5.8 metres long or less, or
 - (ii) 38 millimetres by 140 millimetres if the ladder is more than 5.8 metres long;
 - (c) have rungs that measure not less than,

- (i) 19 millimetres by 64 millimetres if the side rails are 400 millimetres apart, or
- (ii) 19 millimetres by 89 millimetres if the side rails are more than 400 millimetres apart; and

(d) have rungs braced by filler blocks that are at least 19 millimetres thick and located between the rungs.

(5) If a ladder under subsection (3) is a double-width wooden ladder, the ladder **shall** also,

- (a) have three evenly-spaced rails that measure at least 38 millimetres by 140 millimetres;
- (b) have rungs that,
 - (i) measure at least 38 millimetres by 89 millimetres,
 - (ii) extend the full width of the ladder, and
 - (iii) are braced by filler blocks that are at least 19 millimetres thick; and
- (c) be at least 1.5 metres wide but not more than 2 metres wide. **Section 80 (1) to (5).**

(1) A portable ladder,

- (a) shall be free from defective or loose rungs;
- (b) shall be placed on a firm and level footing or support surface; and
- (c) shall not be used in an elevator shaft or a similar hoisting area when the shaft or area is being used for hoisting.

(2) A non-self-supporting portable ladder **shall** be situated so that its base is not less than one-quarter, and not more than one-third, of the length of the ladder from a point directly below the top of the ladder and at the same level as the base of the ladder, if the ladder is not securely fastened to prevent its movement.

(3) A portable ladder or ladder section **shall** not be tied or

fastened to another ladder or ladder section to increase its length unless the manufacturer's instructions allow for this.

(4) A manufactured portable ladder **shall** be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. **Section 81.**

(1) This section applies if a portable ladder is used as a means of access and egress between,

- (a) levels of a building or structure;
- (b) the ground or grade level to a building or structure; or
- (c) different work surface levels.

(2) The ladder,

- (a) shall extend at the upper level at least 900 millimetres above the landing surface;
- (b) shall, subject to subsection (3), have a clear space of at least 150 millimetres behind every rung;
- (c) **shall** be located so that an adequate landing surface that is clear of obstructions is available at the top and bottom of the ladder for access and egress; and
- (d) **shall** be secured at the top and bottom to prevent movement of the ladder.

(3) Clause (2) (b) does not apply to a ladder lying on an excavation wall that is sloped, as **required** by section 234.

Section 82 (1) to (3).

For more information:

- Step Ladder use. **Sections 83 (1)(2).**
- Access Ladder fixed in position. **Sections 84 (1)(2).**

Further details on Reg. 213/91: Construction Projects can be found at Ontario.ca.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

In Prince Edward Island, the use of **step ladders** is regulated under the **Occupational Health and Safety Act General Regulations** – **Part 23: Ladders, Sections 23.1 to 23.3 and 23.5**. These sections provide clear safety requirements for the selection, setup, and use of ladders to reduce the risk of falls and ensure safe work practices.

PART 23 – LADDERS

Use of Ladders

(1) The **employer shall** provide a ladder where workers **must** work in an elevated or sub-level area not provided with other safe and recognizable means of access or egress.

Defective Ladder

(2) The **employer shall** ensure that a ladder is removed from service when it has loose, broken or missing rungs, split side rails or other hazardous defects.

General Obligations of Employer

(3) The **employer shall** ensure that:

- (a) all portable ladders **shall** be equipped with non-slip bases;
- (b) portable metal or wire truss ladders **shall** not be used in the vicinity of electrical circuits or apparatus when the hazard of electrical exposure is present;
- (c) benches, boxes, tables or other makeshift substitutes **shall** not be used as ladders. **Section 23.1 (1) to (3)**.

Specifications

The user of a ladder **shall** ensure that:

- (a) the base of an inclined portable ladder **shall** not be more than one-fourth the length of the ladder out from the

vertical line of contact at the top unless the top is securely fastened;

(b) side rails of ladders when in use **shall** have secure footing and the top rest **shall** be rigid and have ample strength to support the applied load;

(c) where possible the top of the ladder **shall** be securely fastened to prevent movement;

(d) the side rails of a portable ladder **shall** extend at least 914 mm (3 ft.) above a landing;

(e) side rails have a uniform clear width between them not less than 305 mm (12 in.) for ladders 3 048 mm (10 ft.) in length and under, and increasing 6 mm (in.) in width for each additional 300 mm (1 ft.) in length. (EC180/87)

Section 23.2.

General Obligations

The user of a ladder shall:

(a) inspect a ladder before use;

(b) report any unsafe condition of the ladder to the **employer**;

(c) not work from the top three rungs of a single or extension ladder;

(d) not lash or splice ladders together;

(e) not place a ladder in front of or against a door unless the door is blocked in the open position, locked or guarded;

(f) use both hands and face the ladder when ascending or descending;

(g) when standing on a ladder, keep the centre of his body between the side rails. **Section 23.3.**

Step Ladders

(1) The **employer shall ensure that:**

(a) step ladders **shall** not be over 6 096 (20 ft.) in length;

- (b) step ladders **shall** be constructed so that when in the open position of the front section **shall** have a minimum slope of 89 mm (3 1/2 in.) and the back section a minimum slope of 50 mm (2 in.) in each 305 mm (12 in.) length of side rail;
- (c) when in position all treads of step ladders **shall** be level;
- (d) the minimum inside width between side rails at the top step of step ladders **shall** not be less than 305 mm (12 in.) and the side rails **shall** have an additional spread of 25 (1 in.) for each 305 mm (12 in.) of length of step ladder;
- (e) step ladders **shall** be equipped with metal braces to hold legs securely in position;
- (f) back legs of all step ladders **shall** be at least 44 mm (1 3/4 in.) wide and of the same thickness as the side rails;
- (g) cross rails and braces of step ladders **shall** be not less than 13 mm (1/2 in.) thick and **shall** be securely fastened;
- (h) step ladders 3 048 mm (10 ft.) and less in height **shall** have a bottom cross rail and diagonal braces;
- (i) step ladders over 3 048 mm (10 ft.) in height **shall** have bottom and intermediate cross rails and two sets of diagonal braces;
- (j) cross rails **shall** not be less than 100 mm (4 in.) wide and diagonal braces **shall** not be less than 50 mm (2 in.) wide;
- (k) step ladders **shall** be reinforced at each step by a metal tie rod or a metal brace;
- (l) metal parts of step ladders **shall** be of malleable iron, wrought iron or steel;
- (m) the material shelf and the top step on a step ladder are clearly marked to indicate that they are not steps.

Section 23.5 (1).

Further details on the Occupational Health and Safety Act General Regulations can be found at PrinceEdwardIsland.ca.

QUÉBEC

In Québec, the use of **step ladders** on construction sites is regulated under the **Safety Code for the Construction Industry**, specifically **Sections 3.5.1 to 3.5.3 and 3.5.6 to 3.5.9**. These sections provide comprehensive requirements for the safe selection, inspection, and use of ladders, including step ladders, in construction environments.

Ladders and Stepladders

When there are no stairways, ramps, passages, scaffolding, elevators or mast-climbing transport platforms, ladders **shall** be used to gain access to a work area. **Section 3.5.1.**

A ladder **shall**:

- (a) be designed, built, maintained, and used so as not to endanger the safety of workers;
- (b) always be used in such a way that the loads applied do not cause any part of the ladder to be stressed beyond allowed stresses; and
- (c) be suitable for the type of work to be performed, with regard to its type as well as to its length and accessories. **Section 3.5.2.**

Commercial ladders: The **employer shall** ensure that any commercially manufactured ladder that he uses complies with CAN3-Z11-M81 Portable Ladders, except to the extent that the standard is modified by this subdivision. **Section 3.5.3.**

Ladder utilization:

Any ladder **shall**:

- (a) rest on a firm footing and the top **shall** be propped on its 2-side rails;
- (b) be firmly held in place by one or more persons if it is not permanently fastened and if its length is equal to or superior to 9 m;

- (c) be protected against any jolt or sliding which might upset it;
- (d) when not permanently fastened, be so inclined, in compliance with Schedule 0.1, that the horizontal distance between the base of the ladder and the vertical plane of its top support is approximately between 1/4 and 1/3 of the length of the ladder between its supports;
- (e) if used as a means of access:
 - be securely fastened in place;
 - extend at least 900 mm above the upper landing; and
 - have a minimum clear space of 150 mm below any rung;
- (f) be so placed that there is adequate free space at the bottom of the ladder;
- (g) (paragraph revoked);
- (h) not be lashed to another ladder end to end;
- (i) if installed in a continuous vertical position, except ladders permanently installed with hoop protection:
 - have rest platforms with handrails, at intervals not greater than 6 m; and
 - be off-centre at each platform to ensure protection for the upper part;
- (j) not be used near an exposed electrical circuit when it is made of metal or is metal-reinforced;
- (k) be of a length sufficient to allow a person to work without having to use the top 2 rungs; and
- (l) be lifted and lowered by the user in such a way that he faces it. **Section 3.5.6.**

Notwithstanding section 3.6.1, a ladder may be used in an elevator shaft or hoistway to temporarily serve one of the 2 means of egress provided for in that section, for a maximum height of 2 storeys.

In addition, the ladder may be used upon the following conditions:

- (a) the elevator or the hoist **shall** not be in the process of being installed;
- (b) the opening of the shaft at the level of the first landing **shall** be completely closed;
- (c) the opening of the second landing **shall** allow only the free passage of persons;
- (d) the ladder **shall** cover the opening of the second landing so as to prevent persons from falling;
- (e) the ladder **shall** be built as work progresses, but without adversely affecting construction work. **Section 3.5.6.1.**

Stepladder: If the worker uses a stepladder the **employer shall** make sure:

- (a) that it complies with CAN3-Z11-M81 Portable Ladders, except to the extent that the standard is modified by this subdivision;
- (b) that it is not used near an exposed electrical circuit when it is made of metal or is metal-reinforced;
- (c) that its legs are fully spread and that the retaining device is locked; and
- (d) that the top and the rest are not used as a step.

Section 3.5.7.

As long as the permanent or temporary stairways are not finished or ready to be used, ladders **shall** be utilized and kept in good condition. **Section 3.5.8.**

Ladders **shall**:

- (a) be set aside until repaired, when one of their parts is broken or defective;
- (b) not be repaired by using splice-pieces or binding; and
- (c) be stored away and protected against bad weather in a dry place. **Section 3.5.9.**

Further details on the Safety Code for the Construction Industry can be found at Legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca.

SASKATCHEWAN

In Saskatchewan, the safe use of **step ladders** is regulated under the **Occupational Health and Safety Regulations** – **Part 16: Entrances, Exits and Ladders, Sections 16-5 to 16-7**. These sections provide clear requirements for the proper design, placement, and safe use of ladders, including step ladders, to prevent falls and ensure safe access in the workplace.

Ladders

- (1) An **employer**, contractor or supplier **shall** ensure that every ladder is designed, constructed, used and maintained to perform its function safely.
- (2) An **employer**, contractor or supplier **shall** ensure that:
 - (a) no wooden ladder or stepladder is painted with any substance other than a transparent coating; and
 - (b) no ladder is made by fastening cleats across a single rail or post. **Section 165.**

Portable Ladders

- (1) In this section and section 16-7, “portable ladder” means any ladder that is not fixed in place, and includes a stepladder.
- (2) An **employer** or contractor **shall** ensure that:
 - (a) a portable ladder is equipped with non-slip feet;
 - (b) a portable ladder is secured against accidental movement during use;
 - (c) a metal or wire-bound portable ladder is not used where the ladder or a worker handling or using the ladder may come into contact with an exposed energized electrical conductor; and
 - (d) a portable ladder extends at least 1 metre above any

platform, roof or other landing to which the ladder is used as a means of access.

(3) An **employer** or contractor **shall** ensure that each worker who handles or uses a portable ladder is instructed in the requirements of this section.

(4) An **employer** or contractor **shall** ensure that a stepladder:

- (a) is not more than 6 metres high when set for use;
- (b) has legs that are securely held in position by means of metal braces or an equivalent rigid support; and
- (c) when in use, has a front section slope at an angle of 1 horizontal to 6 vertical.

(5) An **employer** or contractor **shall** ensure that:

- (a) an extension ladder is equipped with locks that securely hold the sections of the ladder in the extended position;
- (b) if a section of an extension ladder is extended, the section that is extended overlaps another section for at least 1 metre;
- (c) an extension ladder consisting of 2 sections does not exceed 14.6 metres in length; and
- (d) an extension ladder consisting of more than 2 sections does not exceed 20 metres in length.

(6) An **employer** or contractor **shall** ensure that no single portable ladder and no section of an extension ladder exceeds 9 metres in length. **Section 166 (1) to (6).**

(1) If a worker uses a portable ladder other than a stepladder, an **employer** or contractor **shall** ensure that:

- (a) the ladder is placed against the structure so that the slope of the ladder is 1 horizontal to 4 vertical;
- (b) the worker does not extend any part of the worker's body except for the worker's arms beyond the side rails of the ladder; and

(c) the worker maintains a three-point stance on the ladder at all times.

(2) An **employer** or contractor **shall** ensure that a worker does not work from either of the top 2 rungs or steps of a portable ladder, unless the ladder is a stepladder that has a platform equipped with a suitable handrail. **Section 16-7 (1)(2)**.

Further details on the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations can be found at Saskatchewan.ca.

YUKON

In Yukon, the use of **step ladders** in construction settings is addressed under the **Occupational Health and Safety Regulations – Part 10: Construction and Building Safety, Sections 10.21, 10.25, and 10.27 to 10.29**. These sections provide specific safety requirements for ladder use on construction sites, focusing on fall prevention, secure positioning, and proper access practices.

LADDERS – GENERAL

General Requirements

Any ladder **shall** be:

- (a) of adequate strength and length for the work being done,
- (b) clean and free from grease, oil or other slippery substance,
- (c) maintained in safe condition, and
- (d) removed from service or repaired immediately when it has loose, broken or missing rungs, split side rails or other defects that may be hazardous to a worker. **Section 10.21.**

LADDERS – PORTABLE

Standards

(1) The design, construction and use of portable ladders **shall** meet the requirements of:

- (a) CSA Standard Z11-M81, Portable Ladders
- (b) ANSI Standard A14.1-2000, Safety Requirements for Ladders – Portable Wood,
- (c) ANSI Standard A14.2-2000, Safety Requirements for Portable Metal Ladders, or
- (d) other similar standards acceptable to the board.

Grade Markings

(2) Manufactured portable ladders **shall** be marked for grade and use and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. **Section 10.25 (1)(2).**

General

A portable wooden ladder used at a workplace **shall**:

Lumber grade

- (a) be made of No. 1 structural grade or better spruce or fir,

Coatings

- (b) not be painted other than by being preserved with a transparent protective coating, except for identification markings, which are painted on one side of each side rail, to a maximum of one third of the area of the side rail,

Length

- (c) not exceed 6 m (20 ft.) in length,

Rungs

- (d) have rungs

- free of knots,
- designed to carry a load of 200 kg (440 lbs.) placed at the centre,
- uniformly spaced with a maximum rise of 0.3 m (12 in.),
- secured to each side of the side rail of the ladder by at least three screws or barbed nails of adequate length or by attachments giving equivalent or better strength, and
- with filler blocks installed between the rungs, and

Side rails

(e) have side rails

- dressed on all sides and without sharp edges,
- with a uniform clear width between them of not less than 0.3 m (12 in.) for ladders 3 m (10 ft.) in length or less, and increasing 0.013 m (1/2 in.) in width for each 0.3 m (12 in.) in excess of 3 m (10 ft.), and
- that are free of notches, splices and tapers.

Section 10.27.

Portable Extension Ladders

A portable extension ladder **shall**:

- (a) have no more than three sections,
- (b) have locks that securely hold the sections of the ladder in an extended position, and
- (c) when extended, **shall** maintain a minimum overlap as follows
 - where the ladder is 11 m (36 ft.) or less, the overlap is at least 1 m (3 ft.),
 - where the ladder exceeds 11 m (36 ft.) and is less than 15 m (49 ft.), the overlap is at least 1.25 m

- (4 ft.), and
- where the ladder exceeds 15 m (49 ft.) and is less than 20 m (66 ft.), the overlap is at least 1.5 m (5 ft.). **Section 10.28.**

For more information:

- Worker's responsibilities. **Sections 10.29 (a) to (h).**

Further details on the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations can be found at Wcb.YK.ca.