4 Rules for Ladder Safety Part 1

Four rules cover safe use of ladders. They are:

- Pick the right ladder for the job you are going to do.
- Make sure the ladder is in good condition.
- Set up the ladder correctly.
- Work safely on the ladder.
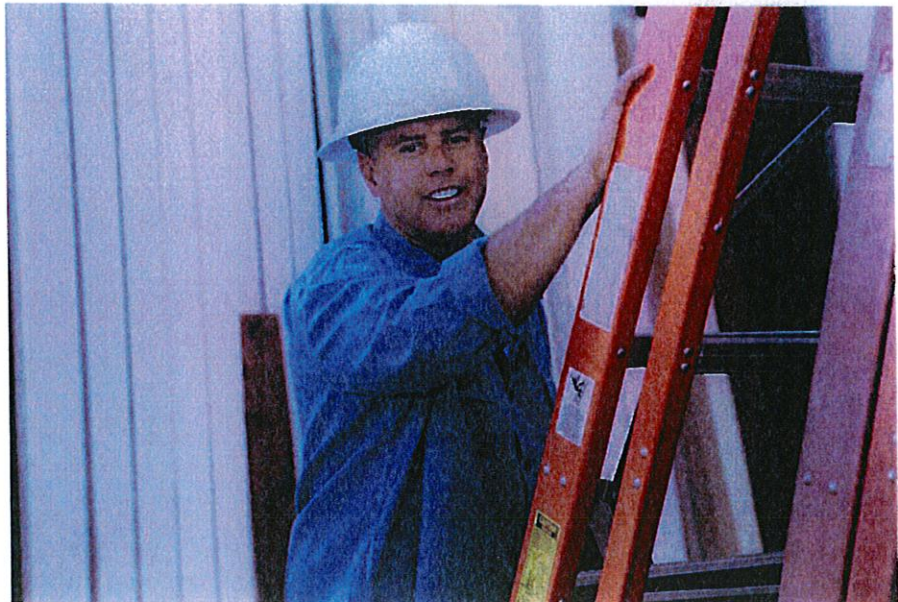
Let's examine these rules one at a time.

Pick the Right Ladder

The ladder should be of the correct type and length. You will probably use an ordinary straight ladder for most purposes. An extension ladder may be required for high work. A step ladder is used when you need a free-standing ladder or one with a tool tray. Some situations may not require a ladder at all. Instead, you may need a scaffold. Never use a metal ladder around any electrical installation.

Check the Condition of the Ladder

Never use a damaged ladder. Make sure all parts of the ladder are in good working order, free from corrosion, rust, rot, cracks and other defects. Check the rungs, side rails, braces, hinges, ropes and pulleys. See that the rungs are free of slippery substances such as oil. Never use a painted ladder because the paint can hide defects. To protect it, use a clear preservative instead of paint.

Make sure that the non-slip rubber feet are in good condition. Check overall for any signs of warping or twisting.

4 Rules for Ladder Safety Part 2

Four rules cover safe use of ladders. They are:

- Pick the right ladder for the job you are going to do.
- Make sure the ladder is in good condition.
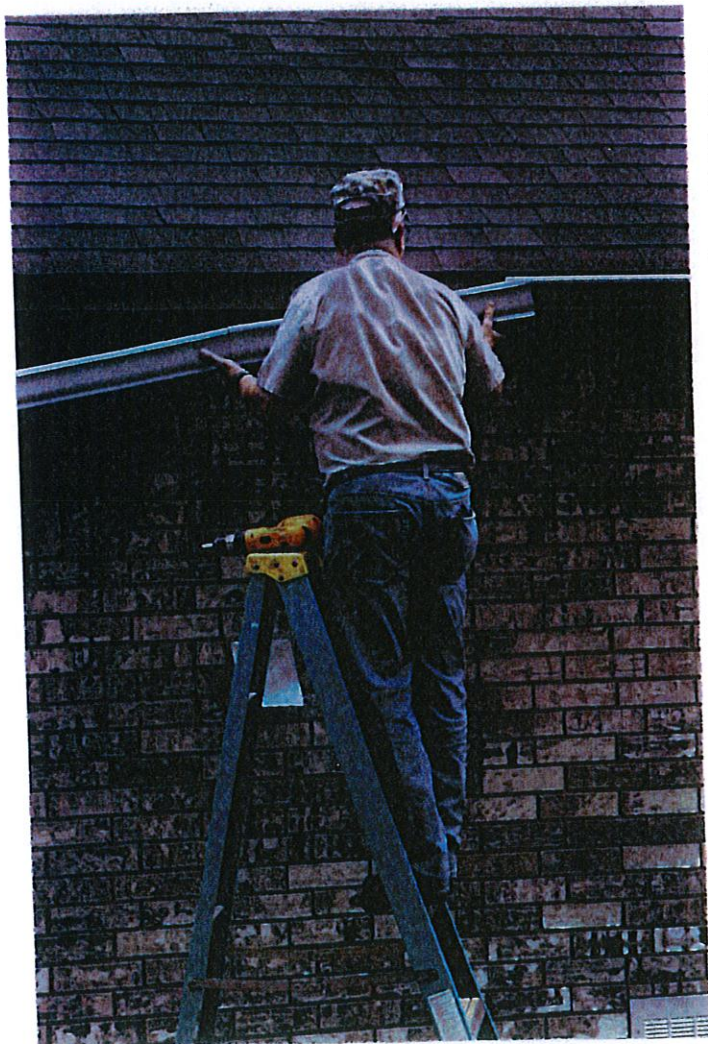- Set up the ladder correctly.
- Work safely on the ladder.

Let's look at the third rule: Set up the ladder correctly

Setting Up the Ladder

With a straight ladder, walk it into position hand over hand. Make sure the base is solid. Tie the top if you can. A straight ladder should be placed against the wall at an angle so that the base of the ladder is one foot away from the wall for every four feet of height. You can remember this formula as the "four up, one out" rule. So a 16 foot extension ladder should be 4 feet out from the wall at the base.

A stepladder should be locked into a fully-open position before you attempt to use it.

Raising an extension ladder is a two-person job. There should be a considerable overlap between each section.

Uneven Ground

If the ground is uneven, utilize boards or other methods to ensure the ladder has even ground to stand on. For soft turf or other mushy surfaces, you can turn the feet up on the ladder to make spikes so it will be stable on the ground.

Roof Access

When using a ladder to gain access to a roof, place the ladder so that it extends at least three feet above the edge. Usually you can just count the rungs to estimate 3 feet.

4 Rules for Ladder Safety Part 3

Four rules cover safe use of ladders. They are:

- Pick the right ladder for the job you are going to do.
- Make sure the ladder is in good condition.
- Set up the ladder correctly.
- Work safely on the ladder.

Let's look at the last rule: Work Safely on a Ladder

Work Safely on a Ladder:

- When climbing or working on a ladder, maintain three-point contact. This means that two hands and one foot, or one hand and two feet should be in contact with the ladder at all times.
- Keep centered on the ladder. Here's a way to remember to do so - your belt buckle should remain between the two side rails at all times. Never lean away from the ladder because you can cause it to topple.
- Do not carry tools or materials in your hands. Keep tools in a belt, or hoist objects up after you.
- Do not stand on the top few rungs of any ladder.
- Footwear should have clean soles made of a non-skid material. Leather is too slippery.
- Never move a ladder while you are on it.
- Move slowly and carefully on a ladder.
- Do not work on a ladder if you are ill, overly tired or possibly under the influence of alcohol or any drug.
- Stay off outdoor ladders during bad weather such as rain, wind or lightning.
- Certain work situations may require the use of fall prevention equipment such as safety belts or harnesses. Be sure to use this equipment as directed and keep it in good condition.