

safety Retail Toolbox Talks matters

From your safety partners at **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd**

Minimising Injuries Through Ladder Safety

Falls from height are frequently listed as one of the top 10 causes of accidents in the workplace. Most of these accidents occur due to failure to follow basic ladder safety. In an industry that commonly utilises ladders, prevent injuries by practising the following safety tips.

Setting up Safely

Make sure you select the correct ladder for the job – check the length and duty rating. Proper length is a minimum of one metre extending over the working surface.

Inspect your ladder before each use for loose or damaged:

- Steps
- Rungs
- Spreaders
- Safety feet
- Other parts

Clear the area where you will be working. Never place a ladder in front of a door that isn't locked, blocked or guarded.

Because metal ladders conduct electricity, use a wooden or fibreglass ladder near electrical equipment or machinery.

Check that all locks on extension ladders are properly engaged before placing your ladder on a steady surface. The ground underneath the ladder should be level and firm. Large, flat wooden boards braced underneath a ladder can help level it on an uneven surface or soft ground. Never place a ladder on top of extra stock, product boxes or other potentially unstable surfaces. Straight, single or extension ladders should be set up at approximately a 75 degree angle.

Use the 1:4 ratio to ensure safety when on a ladder. Place the base of the ladder 30 centimetres away from whatever it's leaning against for every 120 centimetres of height to the top of the ladder.

Use Caution

Always use caution when using a ladder and do not use a ladder for any other purpose than intended. Other safety considerations include:

- Make sure the weight that your ladder is supporting does not exceed its maximum load rating (user plus materials). And only one person should be on a ladder at a time.
- Keep your body centred between the rails of the ladder at all times. Do not lean too far to the side while working. Never overreach – instead, descend and the ladder and move it to a better position.
- Do not step on the top step or bucket shelf, and do not attempt to climb or stand on the rear section of a stepladder.
- Always face the ladder when climbing up or down. Never leave a raised ladder unattended.
- Slowly step down from a ladder if you feel dizzy or tired.
- Non-slip footwear should be worn at all times when on a ladder. Always keep non-slip footwear handy since dress shoes can pose a safety threat on a ladder.

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