MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

# MAFES DAWG TRACKS

*Have you heard that March is Ladder Safety Month? It is a simple tool to use, but often mis-used. Below are a few reminders for safely using a ladder.*

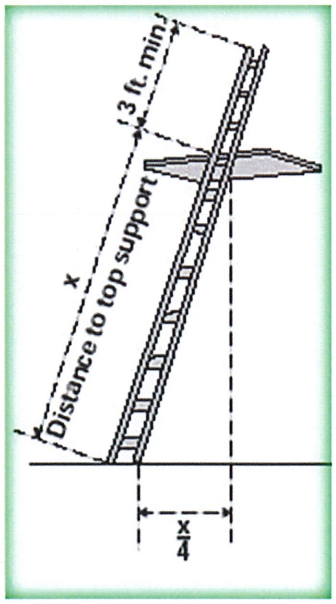
**Dos:**

- Before using a ladder, check it carefully to ensure there are no visible defects and it is in good working condition.
- Use the right ladder for the job. Ensure the ladder is high enough for you to safely reach your work area.
- Be aware of the ladder's load rating and of the weight it is supporting, including the weight of any tools or equipment.
- When using ladders to access another level, secure and extend the ladder at least 3 feet above the landing point to provide a safe handhold.
- Place the ladder on a stable surface and ensure it is level & secured.
- Wear proper footwear (such as non-slip flat shoes; not flip flops or something your foot may easily slip out of). Keep the rungs/steps clean, so they are not slippery.
- Prevent passersby from walking under or near ladders in use by placing barriers (e.g., cones or caution tape) or getting your coworker to act as a lookout.
- Ensure that the ladder is extended to necessary height or folding hinges in fully open, locked position before starting work.

**The proper angle for setting up a ladder is to place its base a quarter of the working length of the ladder from the wall or other vertical surface.**

**DO NOTs:**

- Do not move or shift a ladder while a person or tools/equipment is on the ladder.
- Do not use a ladder with bent legs, missing steps, or any visible cracks or other defects.
- Do not carry any tools or materials in your hands when climbing a ladder. Maintain three points of contact with the ladder at all times (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand).
- Do not lean away from the ladder while working. Always keep your weight centered between the side rails.
- Do not place ladders in front of doors, unless they are blocked or guarded.
- Do not lean a step ladder against a wall to use in the closed position.
- Do not place ladders on top of other objects (boxes, pallets, scaffolds) to gain additional height.
- Do not exceed the maximum load rating of a ladder. This includes your body weight + tools & other objects.
- Do not stand on the top rung of an extension ladder or sit on or straddle the top cap of a step ladder.

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**Sources:**

https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3625.pdf
https://www.osha.gov/Publications/portable_ladder_qc.html
American Ladder Institute

NATIONAL LADDER SAFETY MONTH

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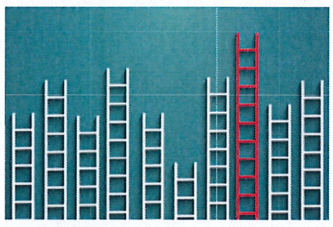
# Choosing your ladder

One of the most common mistakes made by ladder users is choosing the wrong ladder for the job. Here are some things to consider:

- **Take into account your work environment when choosing your ladder.**
  For example, if you're working near sources of electricity, do not use a metal/aluminum ladder. Evaluate the surface on which the ladder will be resting. Is it uneven? Consider if there are any obstructions in the path of the climb. our environment will also help you determine the type of ladder you need for the task — self-supporting stepladder or non-self-supporting single or extension ladder.

- **Consider the length of ladder you need.**
  It is unsafe to use a ladder that is too long or too short. When using a step ladder, for example, it is unsafe to stand on the top cap as it increases the likelihood of losing your balance. Likewise, when using an extension ladder, the top three rungs are not to be used for climbing. An extension ladder is too long if it extends more than 3 feet beyond the upper support point, as it can act like a lever and cause the base of the ladder to move or slide out.



  ***Remember:*** *The advertised height of the ladder is the total length of the side rails. This does not take into account the reduced height due to the set up angles, or steps or rungs not suitable for standing or working from, and in the case of an extension ladder, the overlap between the sections.*

- **Pay attention to the Duty Rating of your ladder.**
  The Duty Rating is the total amount of weight your ladder will support. A taller ladder does not equate to a higher weight rating.

**Here is the simple calculation for determining the Duty Rating needed for the job at hand:**

Your weight + Weight of your protective clothing & equipment + Weight of your tools & supplies being used = **Duty Rating**

Find everything you need at **laddersafetymonth.com**

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