

Ladders are used in many workplaces for a variety of tasks. Unsafe ladder use can cause serious injuries, such as concussions, broken bones and burns, and can result in long-term disability or death.

What's the hazard?

A hazard is something that may expose a person to a risk of injury, this includes unsafe ladder use. Some hazards are more obvious than others. Below are some examples of hazards when working on ladders that could lead to injury. Which could occur in your workplace? Are there any others that may be relevant?

Examples of hazards when using ladders include:

- uneven surfaces
- using a ladder with the wrong height, shape or material for the required task
- climbing a ladder at too steep an angle
- standing on top rungs
- not inspecting ladders prior to use
- contact with electrical equipment
- moving a ladder while on it
- slippery or wet surfaces
- more than one person on ladder at once
- carrying too much or too heavy materials on ladder
- climbing on furniture, boxes or other objects instead of safely using the right type of ladder

What can be done to prevent falls when working on ladders?

The most effective way to prevent a fall is to eliminate the need to work at heights. If that's not possible, there are a few ways to reduce the risk.

Required by law:

- employers must do hazard assessments and identify any hazards in their workplaces, including hazards when using ladders
- employers must ensure all ladders in a workplace are:
 - the right size and strength for that workplace
 - clean of any slippery materials
 - maintained in safe condition
 - removed or repaired if any defects are found that could be hazardous to workers
- employers must have written instructions for working safely with hazards that cannot be eliminated
- employers must offer training to employees on safe work procedures or other written safety instructions
- employers must have procedures for reporting, investigating, and documenting incidents and injuries, and conduct training for employees on those procedures
- workers must:
 - ensure ladders are appropriate for the task
 - inspect ladders before use
 - follow safe use instructions
 - report unsafe ladders to their employer
 - face the ladder and stay between the side rails while climbing
 - safely secure ladders that go beyond 3 metres in height
 - place the ladder at a safe angle
 - only use ladders made of non-conductive materials within 3 metres of electrical lines

- employers and workers have additional specific requirements when working with ladders in building construction, see Yukon *Workplace Health and Safety Regulations*, Part 10

Additional controls:

- get down from a ladder before moving it
- move the ladder to a new position rather than overreaching
- the ladder should extend about a meter above the intended landing point when in position
- maintain three points of contact (two hands and one foot or one hand and two feet) when on a ladder
- use a tool belt to carry tools while on a ladder and a hoist to raise or lower materials
- allow only one person on each ladder at a time
- do not use ladders in high winds

Discussion questions:

1. Which hazards should be assessed before using a ladder in your workplace?
2. Does your workplace provide ladders that are appropriate for the required tasks?
3. Were you provided training on ladder use and safety?
4. Do you know where to find the procedures or written instructions to work safely with ladders?

More information:

If you have more questions or concerns about using ladders, please contact:

- Workers' Safety and Compensation Board, 867-667-5450 or 1-800-661-0443 or work.safe@wcb.yk.ca

Disclaimer

This resource has been prepared to help workplaces understand and comply with workplace health and safety laws. It is not legal advice and is not intended to replace the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act, S.Y. 2021, c.11* and *Workplace Health and Safety Regulations*.

Talk leader instructions:

- This is background information ONLY.
- Be sure to customize to your organization.
- Consider printing copies of this sheet for yourself and each participant.
- Lead a discussion with your workers about the materials on this sheet.
- Be sure to give real life examples whenever possible. Be open to questions.
- Conclude with a brief review of the main points or a summary based on the discussion.
- Fill in the name of your organization, location and the date on your sheet. Have each worker sign your sheet to confirm their attendance.
- File your sheet in your worker records to document the Safety Talk.



Safety Talk record:

Print and complete this page or fill in electronically, then save as a record of your Safety Talk.

Comments/suggestions

Organization name

Safety Talk leader

Date

Safety Talk participants

print name

signature
