

By definition a stepladder is self-supporting, portable, is non-adjustable in length, having flat steps and a hinged back. Stepladders are useful, versatile and at times hazardous. Falls from stepladders are very common. Knowledge of safety guidelines can prevent stepladder incidents from happening.

### What should you do when using a stepladder?

- Use a stepladder that is about 1 m (3 ft) shorter than the highest point you have to reach. This gives a wider, more stable base and places the shelf at a convenient working height.
- Open the stepladder spreaders and shelf fully.
- Check stability. Ensure that all ladder feet are on a firm, level and non-slippery surface.
- Place a stepladder at right angles to the work, with either the front or back of the steps facing the work.
- Keep the stepladder close to the work.
- Do not push or pull stepladders from the side.
- Face the stepladder when climbing up or down. Keep your body centered between side rails. You have climbed too high if your knees are above top of the stepladder or if you cannot maintain a handhold on the ladder.
- Maintain a firm grip. Use both hands when climbing.

### What should you avoid when using a stepladder?

- Do not overreach. Move a stepladder when needed.
- Do not "shift" or "walk" a stepladder when on it.
- Do not stand, climb, or sit on the top or pail shelf.
- Do not overload. They are meant for one person.
- Do not use a stepladder as a brace or as a support for a work platform or plank.
- Do not climb a stepladder that is leaning against a wall. Use a straight ladder instead.
- Do not use stepladders on slippery surfaces.
- Do not use stepladders on soft ground where one leg may sink farther into the ground than others.
- Do not place stepladders on boxes, unstable bases or on scaffolds to gain additional height.
- Do not climb the back of a stepladder.
- Do not use ladders in passageways, doorways, driveways or other locations where a person or vehicle can hit it. Set up suitable barriers or lock doors shut.

### Occupational Health and Safety Regulations State:

#### Portable ladders

16-6

- (1) In this section "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 one 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 six 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 one horizontal to six 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) where a section of an extension ladder is extended, the section that is extended overlaps another section for at least one metre;
  - (c) an extension ladder consisting of two sections does not exceed 14.6 metres in length; and
  - (d) an extension ladder consisting of more than two 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 nine metres in length.

# Tool Box Talk

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When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks.

Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.

For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: [www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks](http://www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks)

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: [www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool\\_Box\\_Meeting.pdf](http://www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf)

## About the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, nonprofit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.