5. Work Safely

- Always do this
  - Follow manufacturer’s recommendations for blocking and securing the ladder.
  - Face the ladder when climbing up and down.
  - Perform your work in line with the ladder, keeping your belt buckle between the rails.
  - Follow the “three-point” rule; keep both feet and one hand or both hands and one foot in contact with the ladder.
  - Keep the top and base areas of a ladder clear of obstructions.
  - Tie off extension ladders.

- Do Not
  - Do not stand on the ladder top (cap) or on the next rung right below it.
  - Do not “walk” the ladder; instead, get off the ladder and move it to the current work area.
  - Do not work at height if you are not feeling well or you are taking medication that may impair your balance – let your supervisor know!

Training

Workers who will be using a ladder to reach an elevation greater than 48 inches are required to take the following course before first use:

- ESH Course 293, Ladder Safety Training (ESH Course 293)

References

1. Evaluate the Task or Work

- What needs to be accomplished?
- Where will the work be performed?
- Has training for this task been completed?

2. Select the Correct Ladder for the Job

- Always use ladders manufactured to ANSI ASC A14-series standards.
- Use only ladders rated as heavy duty or higher (for the correct rating, include weight of both the worker and tools).
- For electrical work, select only a dry ladder – preferably made of fiberglass and never one made of metal.
- Select the length or height of ladder for the task at hand:
  - Extension ladders should extend 3 feet above the roof or platform.
  - Step ladders should be long enough that you stand below the third rung from the top.
  - Step ladders should be high enough so that you stand below the second rung from the top.

  **Do Not**
  - Do not use a chair or desk as a ladder.
  - Do not use a step ladder as a lean-to ladder.

3. Inspect Ladders before Using

- If a ladder shows any of these signs of an unsafe condition, remove it from service:
  - Is the ladder damaged, broken, bent, or delaminated?
  - Does it lack structural integrity; have broken treads or rails?
  - Are parts loose or missing?
  - Is the manufacturer’s rating label missing or not readable?
  - Are accessories (leg levelers, paint shelves, stand-off shelves) in bad condition?
  - Step ladders: do the hinges open fully and do the spreaders lock?
  - Extension ladders: do the rung locks function?

4. Position Ladders Correctly

- Rest the base of ladders on firm, level, dry, non-slippery surfaces, away from hallways, passageways, doorways, driveways, or heavy traffic areas.
- Use leg levelers when necessary to provide firm support.