

# THE SAFETY OBSERVER

Safety Information for Employees

## LADDER SAFETY

Always use the correct type of ladder, make sure the ladder is in safe working condition, and the operator must take commonsense precautions.

When a ladder is necessary to reach elevated areas, use the following guidelines:

- Do not use objects such as boxes, buckets, machinery, crates, etc. to elevate yourself. Always use the appropriate size ladder for the job being performed. Always use ladders on a firm and level surface. Never place the ladder on another surface, like on a desk or box to reach higher areas.
- Be sure that the ladder is in good condition. Check it for non-skid safety grips and safety ties. (Ties support the bottom portion to prevent the ladder from slipping.) If any part of a ladder is missing, loose, or otherwise defective, take and lock the ladder out of service until repaired. If beyond repair, dispose of the ladder. It may be necessary to post an "out of order" sign or lock a defective ladder to prevent an unaware employee from using it.
- Do not use a stepladder as a straight ladder. Always extend/open stepladders with the spreader locked in place.
- Keep all METAL ladders away from electrical wires. It is a good idea to keep any kind of ladder away from electrical wires. Extreme caution must be taken any time you may need to work near electrical wires or power lines.
- The top of the ladder should be 36 inches higher than the level at which you are working.
- While on a ladder, you should only reach with your arms, never with your body. Always keep your weight centered between the rails and use a safety belt if both hands are to be occupied.
- Never stand above the THIRD step from the top.
- Always face the ladder, use both hands, and take one step at a time while climbing and descending. Never rush.
- Only one person is to be on the ladder at a time.
- Never attempt to carry heavy, large, or awkward objects while climbing a ladder. Tools and other smaller item should be carried in a shoulder bag, in a tool belt, backpack, or hoisted with a line. Both your hands must be free for climbing.

**Place a ladder ONE-FOURTH of its vertical height  
away from the building or structure.**