



LADDER SAFETY FOR HOUSES OF WORSHIP

LOSS CONTROL BULLETIN

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Houses of worship rely heavily on their congregations to do a wide variety of jobs on a regular basis, such as cleaning, decorating for holidays, painting, and maintenance. It's important to effectively manage these members', volunteers', and employees' on-site activities.

Slips, trips, and falls are a leading cause of injury for houses of worship, but most can be prevented. Consider the following information when members, volunteers, and employees are working or volunteering.

TASK EVALUATION

Choose the right people for the task at hand.

- Hire a contractor if the task cannot be safely completed by members/volunteers.
- The ground is the safest place for non-professionals to work. Working from heights and/or ladders should be avoided when possible.
- The people involved should be physically able to perform the task. Can they lift the box? Can they climb a ladder? Are there any concerning health conditions?
- The people doing a certain task should have the skillset and mindset to complete it safely. Do they have prior experience? Is training necessary or required? What personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed — safety glasses, hearing protection, gloves, dust masks, fall protection, etc.?
- Determine how many people are needed to do the job safely.
- Assign a leader to manage and supervise the activity to ensure safe completion.

LADDER SELECTION AND USE

- Choose the ladder that is best suited for the task. Know the difference between stepladders and extension ladders.
- Keep all ladders in good working condition and inspect them before use for any signs of damage. All types of ladders (wooden, metal and fiberglass) with damage should be discarded immediately.
- Read and follow all instructions on the ladder.
- Do not load ladders beyond their duty rating, which includes the weight of the person on the ladder and any tools or equipment they may be using. Ladders used for a house of worship shall be rated Type 1 or better.

Type I — Heavy duty, 250-pound limit

Type IA — Extra heavy duty, 300-pound limit

Type IAA — Special duty, 375-pound limit

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR LADDER USERS

When beginning a job that involves ladder use, make sure members, volunteers, and workers know these safety rules.

- Use extension ladders at a 4-to-1 ratio, where the distance from the base to a vertical wall is one-fourth the working length of the ladder. All braces and locking mechanisms on an extension ladder or a step ladder must be used.
- Look overhead for any electrical hazards or obstructions. Never use metal ladders near an electrical source.
- Always maintain three points of contact when using a ladder.

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- Never use the top two rungs of the ladder as steps.
- Always face the ladder when climbing and descending.
- Maintain balance and center of gravity on a ladder by keeping the belt-buckle area between the two side rails. If the working area or item cannot be reached from that point, climb down and move the ladder to the correct location.
- Use spotters to hold the ladder and ensure it is firmly secured. Spotters can also help hand material and tools up to the person on the ladder.
- Remove all tools and materials from the ladder before moving.
- Keep the working area around a ladder clear of foot traffic and activities taking place at the facility, don't use a ladder over doorways that people are actively using. Route electrical, telephone, and microphone cords around walkways and doorways.



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