

Working Safely with Stepladders at Duke

Practicing the Five Rules of Ladder Safety

Rule #1: Select the right ladder for the job.

When working with or adjacent to electricity use a fiberglass or wooden ladder. Never use a metal ladder.

Stepladders are designed to be freestanding. Extension ladders are designed to lean against something. *Use the ladder as it was designed to be used.*

Stepladders come with different types of load ratings and various lengths. *Choose the type that has a greater load rating than the combined weight of you AND any items you may carry on the ladder.* Here are the load ratings of stepladder types commercially available:

TYPES OF STEPLADDERS

I-AA Load Rating: 375 lbs (extra heavy duty)

I-A Load Rating: 300 lbs (heavy duty)

I Load Rating: 250 lbs (heavy duty)

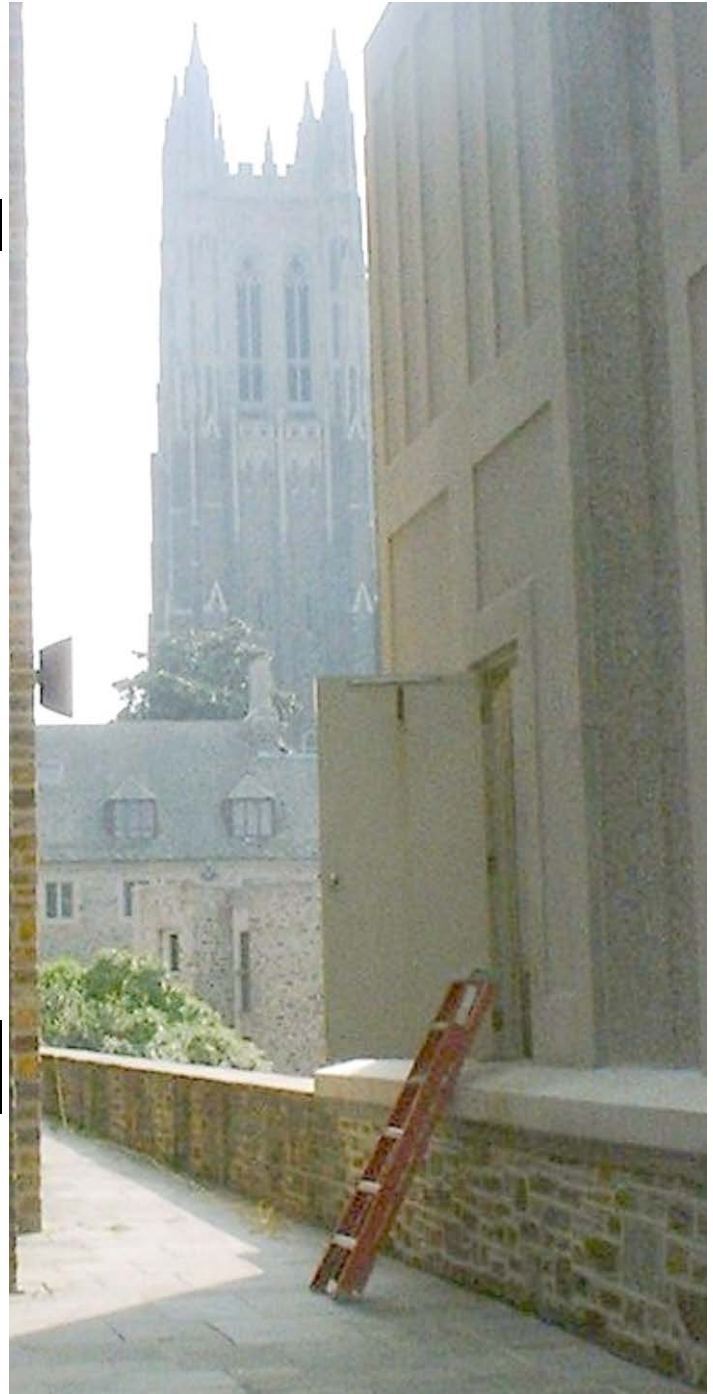
II Load Rating: 225 lbs (medium duty)

III Load Rating: 200 lbs (light duty)

STAY BELOW THE LOAD RATING OF YOUR LADDER!

Choose the length of stepladder that allows you to access the work location without standing on the top two steps of the ladder of a stepladder and without working in an awkward posture.

Above: A stepladder being used improperly to access an area near the Duke Chapel.





Always practice ladder safety! Cheat a little and you could lose a lot.



Above: A crack is discovered on the top step of a ladder that had been used improperly. The top step is not for

DO NOT STAND ON THE TOP TWO STEPS OF A STEP LADDER!

Rule #2: Inspect the ladder before you use it.

Before using a stepladder AND after it has been abused in any way (e.g. fallen over, etc.) it MUST be inspected.

Check to ensure that:

- All steps are free of oil, grease, dirt, etc.
- All fittings are tight.
- No protrusions could cause cuts or scratches.
- Spreaders or other locking devices are in place.
- Non-skid safety feet are in place.
- There are no structural defects and all support braces are intact.

Any stepladder found to have a defect should be tagged **DANGER – DO NOT USE** and removed from service until repairs can be made, or it can be destroyed.



Rule #3: Set up the ladder with care.

Check to ensure that the ladder is placed on a level surface that is free from any substances that may cause slipping.

Check to ensure that the spreaders are fully opened and in the “locked” position.

Rule #4: Climb and descend ladders cautiously.

Climb and descend the ladder while facing it and maintaining at least three point contact.

Carry tools on a tool belt AND/OR raise and lower other items with a hand line.

Do NOT climb the backside of a stepladder or allow other employees to do so.

Rule #5: Use safe practices when working on a ladder.

REMEMBER the BELT BUCKLE RULE!

Avoid over reaching while on a ladder. A good rule of thumb is to keep your belt buckle between the side rails.

Never attempt to reposition the ladder while you are standing on it.

For their safety, do NOT allow others to work under a ladder.

Do NOT place a ladder in front of a door.

Do NOT use a ladder for other than its intended purpose.

Questions?

Call the Occupational and Environmental Safety Office (OESO) for assistance or information on the following topics:

- Training on the proper selection, inspection and safe use of portable and/or fixed ladders.
- Concerns about the safety of a particular portable or fixed ladder.
- Concerns about how to safely access a work location by a ladder or other means.
- OSHA regulations on portable or fixed ladders.



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