

Louisiana State University

Office of Facility Services

Operating Instruction 4004

Revision: 5
Effective Date: December 1, 2010
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SUBJECT: PROPER USE OF LADDERS

I. General

- A. There is a potential for personal injury and property damage due to the improper use and handling of ladders, therefore there is a need for safe handling procedures for the use of this equipment.

II. Responsibilities

A. Supervisors

- 1. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all employees they supervise have read and understand this operating instruction and any other safety policies/procedures pertaining to ladders.

B. Employees

- 1. Employees are responsible for reading, understanding and complying with this operating instruction. Employees are also responsible for asking questions of their supervisors if they do not understand this instruction. Any employee who is aware of any safety issue is responsible for correcting the issue or reporting it to a higher authority. Violation of any safety policy, procedure or instruction may result in disciplinary action.

III. Ladders

The following practices should be followed to avoid mishaps:

1. The base of each ladder should be set firm and level on the floor/ground.
2. Walkways for access to and from ladders, as well as areas at the base and top, should be kept clear of ice, mud, materials, equipment or debris. Ladder rungs or steps should be free of ice, mud, material, debris, etc.
3. Ladders should not be used as support for scaffolds. While ladder jack scaffolds are acceptable under certain federal regulations, they are for light duty use only.
4. Ladders should be long enough, so that workers can perform their functions without climbing higher than the third step from the top.
5. Never use two ladders spliced together.
6. Manufactured ladders used on floors or other set surfaces should be equipped with safety feet.
7. A ladder should never be set up in a driveway or in front of a door where the swing of the door could cause the ladder to fall. If the ladder must be set up in these areas, barricades must be used and a worker stationed at the foot of the ladder to keep the ladder from being struck.
8. When using a ladder in a walkway, barricade the work area.
9. Workers should face the ladder and use both hands when climbing or descending. Tools and materials should be raised and lowered by hand lines or other means; they should not be carried by the worker, except via use of a tool belt, etc.
10. Workers should never attempt to move a ladder while they are on it and should avoid over reaching. Both actions can cause a ladder to fall.
11. The length of straight manufactured ladders should not exceed 30 feet for a single ladder or 60 feet for an extension ladder.
12. The length of job-made ladders should not exceed 24 feet for a single cleat ladder. An Assistant Director must approve the use of a job-built ladder.

C. Step Ladders

1. Step ladders should only be used in a fully opened position with spread bars locked.

D. Straight Ladders/Extension Ladders

1. Straight ladders and extension ladders (except fixed ladders) should be placed so that the base of the ladder is horizontal, approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ the distance (from the base to the upper point of support) away from the base of the wall or structure.

E. Wood Ladders

1. Standard manufactured ladders should be proper size and construction, well cared for and unpainted. While they should not be painted, a clear coat of shellac or varnish on a ladder will protect the wood, but not cover up defects. Wood ladders must be discarded when cracked or split.
2. Job-built ladders must be approved by an Assistant Director before use. Job-built ladders should be made of good stock, free from knots and must follow accepted standards. The cleats should be recessed into the side rails or filler blocks and should be attached to the side rails between the cleats. The cleats should be secured with three (3) nails at each end. When cracked or split, the ladder must be destroyed and discarded.

F. Metal Ladders

1. Metal ladders must not be used when working on electric circuits.

G. Procedures when working above second floor level:

1. When a scaffold or mechanical lift is available and appropriate for the work, do not use a ladder.
2. When working from a ladder, the base of the ladder shall be stabilized by sandbags or an employee should stabilize the base by holding it. When sandbags are used, two (2) fifty pound sandbags will be placed behind each leg of the ladder to brace it from slipping backwards.

3. Ladders should be fastened securely to a stable support at the top, if possible, with a rope of sufficient strength to prevent the ladder from side to side movement.
4. The employee should wear a safety belt or harness when there is a safe place to anchor it. The line used to connect the belt/harness to a stable support of a building shall have a maximum length of five (5) feet.