NEW JERSEY PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

NJ PEOSH ALERT #40

Preventing Public Employee Injuries and Fatalities as a Result of Accidents with Ladders

Following several recent ladder-related incidents resulting in serious injuries to public employees, PEOSH advises all public employers to revisit the following safety protocols with their employees. It is crucial to ensure that employees are properly trained to comply with OSHA standards.

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SCAN ME

ATTENTION: ALL NEW JERSEY EMPLOYERS

Please ensure that this information is shared with all appropriate personnel

May 2025:

Due to a number of recent ladder-related incidents involving serious injuries to public employees, PEOSH recommends that all public employers review the following safety measures with affected employees and ensure that their employees are trained to meet the OSHA standards at 29 CFR 1910.30 for General Industry and 1926.1060 for Construction:

- Use the right ladder for the job. For example, ensure the ladder is high enough to reach the work area without having to stand on the top rung and that step ladders are not used as a single ladder.
- The base of the ladder should be secured with workers paying close attention to uneven surfaces such as cracks, holes, uneven pavement, elevated grades, snow, ice buildup on the roadway/ sidewalks, and the proximity to utility power lines that have electrical potential to cause electrocution or shock.
- A coworker must foot a ladder while an employee is on it if it is not suitably secured against unintentional movement. Do not move a ladder while a coworker or equipment is on the ladder.
- Wear proper footwear (e.g., non-slip flat shoes).
- Ensure that the ladder is fully extended before starting work, if applicable. Secure halyards (rope) on extension ladders prior to climbing and check that rung locks (dogs) are secure.

THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DOL

OFFICE OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY
AND HEALTH

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- Prevent passersby from walking under or near ladders in use by using barriers (e.g., cones) or getting your coworker to act as a spotter.
- Do not work on the top rung of the ladder unless the ladder is specially designed for this application.
- Always maintain three points of contact with the ladder while keeping your body near the middle, facing the ladder.
- Before using a ladder, inspect it carefully to ensure there are no visible defects and that it is in good working condition.
- Check, use and maintain the ladder according to the manufacturer's instructions. Ensure manufacturer labels are present and legible on the ladder. If there is something wrong with the ladder or you have a question be sure to ask a supervisor before climbing. Double check the climbing angle before starting work and consider the weight of tools and the climber do not exceed the manufacturer's instructions.
- Do not use faulty ladders such as ladders that are bent, missing ladder rungs, and the spreader bar locking device on the ladder is missing. If a faulty ladder is found, immediately tag it as "Dangerous, Do Not Use" and remove it from service until it is repaired or replaced. Ensure the rungs are clean prior to beginning work.
- When using ladders to access another level, secure and extend the ladder at least 3 feet above the landing point to provide a safe handhold.
- Maintain a safe distance between ground ladders and overhead electric power lines. Electric shock can occur when a person contacts an energized conductor or other energized objects and provides a path for the flow of electricity to the ground. Consider using ladders with non-conductive fiberglass ladder beams to reduce the risk of electrocution/ shock.

USEFUL REFERENCES:

- **29 CFR 1910.23 –** General Ladder Safety Requirements
- **29 CFR 1926.1053 –** Construction Ladder Safety Requirements
- **NFPA 1932-2020 Edition:** Standard on Use, Maintenance, and Service Testing of In-Service Fire Department Ground Ladders
- **American Ladder Institute Standards (https://www.americanladderinstitute.org/page/A14Standards)**