

HAZARD ALERT

April 2011

Fall From Ladder: Worker Dies

Lac La Biche, Alberta – On April 28, 2011, a 54-year-old employee sustained fatal head injuries when he fell to the floor from the ladder he was using in the warehouse of a carpet and flooring retail store.

This incident is yet another sad reminder that everyone who uses a ladder must be attentive and take great care, at all times. Far too often, those who work with ladders quickly become complacent, especially when they work with them on a frequent basis. After all, ladders can appear to be relatively harmless – particularly when compared with power tools (like saws) and heavy equipment (like forklifts). However, this attitude creates a very unsafe sense of security.

Although the cause of this incident is not publically known at this time, it is possible that this tragedy could have been avoided if some basic precautionary measures, procedures and techniques had been followed (like the ones below):

DO:

- Carefully inspect the ladder before each use (look for loose, damaged and missing parts, etc).
- Set the ladder on a solid and level surface (ensure it is stable and secure – not wobbly).
- Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder.
- Set extension ladders at a 4:1 ratio (which means that for every 4 feet up, set the base one foot out).
- Secure extension ladders at the base and the top.
- Maintain 3 points of contact when ascending & descending (as depicted to the right).
- Verify that the ladder is CSA approved.
- Face the ladder when ascending, descending & working from it.
- Ensure the top of an extension ladder rests against a stable surface (i.e. eavestrough is a flimsy material that may buckle under the weight of the ladder and user; therefore, it is not an appropriate surface).
- Extend extension ladders 1m (3ft) beyond the top of the surface they rest against (when being used to access a work area).

DON'T:

- Step on the top 2 rungs of a ladder.
- Overreach (instead, get off and move it)
- Use a ladder that is damaged in any way (place it out of service and inform a supervisor).
- Allow more than one person to use a ladder at the same time.
- Carry anything while ascending or descending any type of ladder.

- FACTS:**
- **The majority of fatalities from falls happen at heights of 6 feet or less!**
 - **The average number of days lost due to an injury resulting from a fall is 59 days! Source – WCB BC**



Manitoba Regulations 217/2006

Worker to inspect ladder

13.8 An employer must ensure that a worker inspects a ladder for defects prior to each use. A ladder found to be broken or defective may not be used until it has been repaired and restored to its original design specifications.

Portable ladders

13.16(1) When in use at a workplace, an employer must ensure that a portable ladder is secured against movement at all times during use and is placed on a stable, level base.

NOTE: Any reference to the Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Regulation is for convenience sake only. The original text must be consulted for all intents and purposes of applying the law.

