**Safe Job Procedure for Extension Ladders**

1. **Selection and inspection**

* Wear appropriate personal protective equipment.
* Use a ladder that is designed for the task. Check the ladder’s length, strength/grade and type/use.
* Use a fibreglass ladder when doing electrical work or when working in close proximity to electrical equipment.
* Inspect the ladder prior to each use for the following;
* Damaged or worn non-slip feet.
* Loose nails, screws, bolts or nuts.
* Rotted, decayed or warped rails on wooden ladders.
* Cracked or exposed fibreglass on fibreglass ladders.
* Cracked, split, worn or broken rails, braces, steps or rungs.
* Sharp edges on rails and rungs.
* Rough or splintered surfaces.
* Corrosion, rust, oxidization and excessive wear.
* Twisted or distorted rails (check by sighting along the rails).
* Missing identification labels.
* Loose, broken or missing extension locks.
* Defective locks that do not seat properly when extended.
* Sufficient lubrication of working parts.
* Defective cords, chains or ropes.
* Do not use a broken or unsafe ladder, attach a warning tag, take it out-of-service and advise your supervisor.

1. **Operation**

* Get help when handling a heavy or long extension ladder.
* Check for overhead electrical wires or other hazards before setting up the ladder.
* Clear the area around the base of the ladder of debris and other objects.
* Set up barricades and warning signs wherever necessary.
* Place the ladder on a firm, level surface and ensure it is secure.
* Erect the ladder so the upper section rests on (in front of) the bottom section (i.e. the bottom section faces the wall or supporting surface).
* Two workers are required to set up a ladder weighing more than 25 kg (55 lb) or where conditions complicate the task.

***Method for two workers setting up an extension ladder;***

* Lay the ladder on the ground close to the intended location.
* One worker braces the ladder’s base with his/her feet.
* The other worker grabs the top rung with both hands, raises the top end of the ladder over his/her head and walks toward the base of the ladder. Grasp the centre of the rungs.
* Move the erect ladder to the desired location. Lean it forward against the resting point.

***Method for one worker setting up an extension ladder;***

* Place the bottom of the ladder firmly against the base of the wall or stationary object.
* Lift the top of the ladder and push upwards to raise the ladder to a vertical position.
* Transfer the ladder to its required position when it is erect.
* Keep the ladder upright and close to your body with a firm grip.
* The method for lowering a ladder is the reverse of erecting it.
* Place the ladder’s feet so that the horizontal distance between the feet and the top support is 1/4 of the working length of the ladder.
* The ladder should be leaning at a 75 degree angle from the ground.
* Raise and lower the ladder from the ground. Ensure that the locking ladder hooks are secure before climbing the ladder.
* Erect the ladder so that approximately one metre (3 ft) extends above a landing platform. Tie the top of the ladder at support points.
* Maintain the minimum overlap of sections as noted on the ladder’s label.
* Brace or tie off the ladder near the base. If there is no structure to tie off to, use a stake. Leave the tie-off in place until the ladder is taken down.
* If your boots are muddy then clean the soles before climbing the ladder.
* Avoid climbing with wet soles. Ensure your footwear is in good condition.
* Face the stepladder when climbing up or down. Keep your body centered between the side rails.
* Maintain a firm grip. Use both hands when climbing. Grasp the rungs.
* Maintain three point contact by keeping two hands and one foot, or two feet and on hand on the ladder at all times.

1. **Storage and maintenance**

* Clean a fibreglass ladder every three months. Spray it lightly with a clear lacquer or paste wax.
* Protect a wooden ladder with a clear sealer or wood preservative.
* Return ladders to the designated storage area after use.
* Store ladders where they are protected from the weather.
* Keep ladders clean and free of foreign materials.
* Keep wooden ladders in a well-ventilated location away from dampness and excessive heat.