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Safe Job Procedure for Step Ladders

1. Selection and inspection

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Use a ladder that is designed for the work task. Check the ladder's strength/grade, type/use and CSA approval.
- Select a stepladder that is about 1 m (3 ft) shorter than the highest point you have to reach. This gives a wider, more stable base and places the shelf at a convenient working height.
- Use a fibreglass ladder when doing electrical work or when working in close proximity to electrical equipment.
- Inspect the stepladder before each use for the following;
 - Damaged or worn non-slip feet.
 - Loose nails, screws, bolts or nuts.
 - Loose or faulty spreaders, locks and other metal parts in poor condition.
 - Rotten, decayed or warped rails on wooden ladders.
 - Cracks and 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, especially on treads.
 - Twisted or distorted rails. Check by sighting along the rails.
 - Missing identification labels.
 - Loose or bent hinges and hinge spreaders.
 - Broken stop on a hinge spreader.
- Do not use a broken or unsafe ladder, attach a warning tag, take it out-of-service and advise your supervisor.

2. Operation

- Get help when handling a heavy and/or long stepladder.
- 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.
- Open the stepladder spreaders and shelf fully; lock into correct position.

Please note: This document is for information purposes only as a guide. The safe job procedures (SJP) and safe work practices (SWP) created for your workplace should reflect your organizations processes, equipment and hazards as identified by a hazard analysis. Construction Safety Nova Scotia does not assume responsibility for the use of information in this document. If assistance is needed to complete a SWP and SJP for your organization please contact CSNS member services at constructionsafetyns.ca or 1.800.971.3888.



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- Check stability. Ensure that all ladder feet are on a firm, level and non-slippery surface.
- Place the stepladder at a right angle to the work with the back of the steps facing the work.
- Keep the stepladder close to the work.
- 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 and down. Keep your body centered between the side rails. Do not work from either the top two steps of a stepladder.
- Maintain a firm/secure grip. Use both hands when climbing.
- Maintain a three point contact by keeping two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder at all times.
- Ensure all items are secure on the stepladder.

3. 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.

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