

## OSHA Training Toolbox Talk: Portable Extension Ladders – Safety DO's and DO NOT's

[Reference 1910 Subpart D / 1926 Subpart X]

Avoid many common accidents that occur when using a portable extension ladder by observing the following tips:

### **DO's . . .**

- Always inspect your portable extension ladder before use, and take it out of service if there is any deficiency found that affects its safe use.
- Make sure both feet of your portable extension ladder are set on a level, stable surface that is not slippery; when that is not possible, the ladder must be secured or stabilized to prevent accidental displacement. And place a temporary barricade, such as cones or caution tape, around the ladder when setting up in locations such as passageways, doorways, or driveways where they can be displaced by moving equipment, other activities or traffic.
- Ensure your extension ladder is placed so that *both* side rails are supported against the wall or other supporting surface, unless the ladder is equipped with a single support attachment.
- Set the extension ladder up at an angle so that the bottom is placed one-fourth of the working length of the ladder from the wall or other vertical surface (*see handout*).
- Make sure the side rails any extension ladder used to gain access to an upper landing surface extend at least three feet above the landing surface (*see handout*).
- Keep your ladder, your body, your tools and any materials at least 10 feet away from energized electrical conductors (or even further for higher voltages exceeding 50kv).
- Always make sure at least one of your hands is firmly ***grasping*** a rung or side rail when you are climbing up or down a ladder. And be aware that just sliding your hand along a side rail as you ascend or descend the ladder does **NOT** constitute "*grasping*" the ladder.
- Maintain your balance and center of gravity on your portable extension ladder by keeping your belt-buckle between the two side rails. Reposition the ladder when necessary instead of over-reaching.

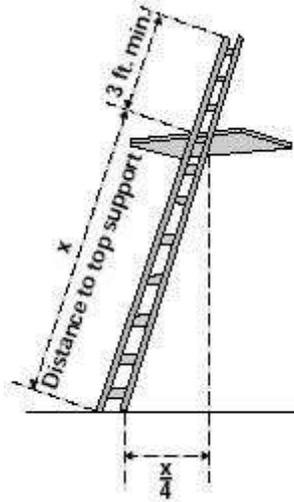
### **DO NOT's . . .**

- Never use a portable extension ladder for purposes for which it was not designed.
- Do not use a portable extension ladder made of metal or any other conductive materials when performing any task or working in an area where you, your tools or materials, or the ladder could make contact with energized electrical conductors or equipment.
- Never climb up or down a portable extension ladder while carrying any object that prevents you from firmly grasping the ladder with at least one hand or could cause you to lose your balance.
- Never attempt to move or reposition a ladder while you or someone else is standing on it.

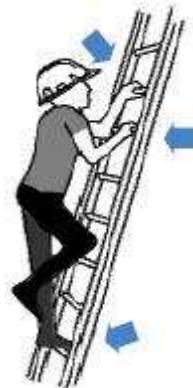
It's also a good idea to always read and follow the ladder manufacturer's instructions and warning posted on the labels attached to your portable extension ladder.

Does anyone have any questions or comments about these tips for the safe use of portable extension ladders? Anyone have an additional tip to share? Thank you, and please be sure to sign your name to the training certification form so you get credit for attending today's training session.

## PORTABLE EXTENSION LADDER SAFETY



*Proper 3-foot side-rail extension at top of ladder, and best angle for portable extension ladder set against a wall or other supporting structure.*



*Always face the ladder when climbing up or down. Maintain a firm grip with at least one hand on a rung or side-rail of your ladder at all times when climbing up or down. Keep your body positioned near the middle of the ladder, and do not over-extend when reaching to the side.*

Source for images: [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)