
29 C.F.R. § 1910.23

Ladders.

(a) *Application.* The employer must ensure that each ladder used meets the requirements of this section. This section covers all ladders, except when the ladder is:

- (1) Used in emergency operations such as firefighting, rescue, and tactical law enforcement operations, or training for these operations; or
- (2) Designed into or is an integral part of machines or equipment.

(b) *General requirements for all ladders.* The employer must ensure:

- (1) Ladder rungs, steps, and cleats are parallel, level, and uniformly spaced when the ladder is in position for use;
 - (2) Ladder rungs, steps, and cleats are spaced not less than 10 inches (25 cm) and not more than 14 inches (36 cm) apart, as measured between the centerlines of the rungs, cleats, and steps, except that:
 - (i) Ladder rungs and steps in elevator shafts must be spaced not less than 6 inches (15 cm) apart and not more than 16.5 inches (42 cm) apart, as measured along the ladder side rails; and
 - (ii) Fixed ladder rungs and steps on telecommunication towers must be spaced not more than 18 inches (46 cm) apart, measured between the centerlines of the rungs or steps;
 - (3) Steps on stepstools are spaced not less than 8 inches (20 cm) apart and not more than 12 inches (30 cm) apart, as measured between the centerlines of the steps;
 - (4) Ladder rungs, steps, and cleats have a minimum clear width of 11.5 inches (29 cm) on portable ladders and 16 inches (41 cm) (measured before installation of ladder safety systems) for fixed ladders, except that:
 - (i) The minimum clear width does not apply to ladders with narrow rungs that are not designed to be stepped on, such as those located on the tapered end of orchard ladders and similar ladders;
 - (ii) Rungs and steps of manhole entry ladders that are supported by the manhole opening must have a minimum clear width of 9 inches (23 cm);
 - (iii) Rungs and steps on rolling ladders used in telecommunication centers must have a minimum clear width of 8 inches (20 cm); and
 - (iv) Stepstools have a minimum clear width of 10.5 inches (26.7 cm);
 - (5) Wooden ladders are not coated with any material that may obscure structural defects;
 - (6) Metal ladders are made with corrosion-resistant material or protected against corrosion;
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- (7) Ladder surfaces are free of puncture and laceration hazards;
- (8) Ladders are used only for the purposes for which they were designed;
- (9) Ladders are inspected before initial use in each work shift, and more frequently as necessary, to identify any visible defects that could cause employee injury;

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