



## **Must Know Ladder Safety Tips**

What's wrong with this picture?

In many workplaces, workers are vulnerable to falls. There are many kinds of falls and this picture illustrates two of them:

1. Falls from ladders
2. Falls through floor openings

As if simply falling off a ladder to the ground below isn't dangerous enough, a worker using this ladder the way it has been positioned would also be at risk of falling through the open doors into this building's basement.

This hazardous situation is easily avoidable. First, the ladder could be placed a safe distance from either side of the open basement doors, so that the opening doesn't pose a risk to a worker on the ladder. Second, if the ladder had to be positioned in that particular location, say, to access the window, the basement doors should be closed and secured before the ladder is put in place.

To protect your workers from falling off ladders, make sure they:

- Place ladders on solid, level ground
- Do not position ladders near an edge or floor opening that would significantly increase the potential fall distance
- Face the treads when going up and down the ladder and stay in the center of the side rails
- Maintain three points of contact with the ladder at all times
- Avoid leaning to one side or overreaching
- Carry tools in a tool belt or raise and lower them with a hand line
- Wear shoes/boots with clean, slip-free soles
- Do not place a step ladder on boxes or scaffolds to gain extra height
- Take extra care when positioning a ladder in corridors or driveways where it could be hit by a person or vehicle
- Do not move a ladder while someone is on it
- Wear fall protection when required by the OHS regulations

And, to protect workers from falls through openings, you should:

- Identify hazardous openings
- Install either guardrails or coverings that comply with the requirements in the OHS regulations for these safety measures
- Develop a hazardous openings policy, which should bar workers from placing ladders near or over floor openings such as the one in the picture
- Train workers on these policies