

Mount Holyoke College

Ladder Use Policy

June 2012

Purpose

Stairways and ladders are a major source of injuries and fatalities among workers. Mount Holyoke recognizes the importance of safe ladder use and has adopted the following policy. All employees are expected to use ladders in accordance with manufacturers' recommended practices and the following requirements, which conform to OSHA standards 1926.1053 (Ladders), 1910.25 (Portable Wood Ladders), and 1910.26 (Portable Metal Ladders).

Ladder Standards and Ratings

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) establishes standards for ladder construction. Depending on the material and type of ladder, different ANSI safety codes apply. The ANSI codes are as follows: Wood Ladder ANSI A14.1, Metal Ladder ANSI A14.2, Fixed Ladder ANSI A14.3, Fiberglass Ladder ANSI A14.5, Steel Ladder ANSI A14.7, Stage Platform ANSI A10.8, Rolling Scaffold ANSI A10.8, and Special Duty ANSI A14.10.

ANSI codes also establish Duty Ratings identifying the conditions under which the ladder can be safely used. The Duty Rating system is as follows:

Type IAA	Special-duty/professional use:	375 pound load capacity
Type IA	Extra-heavy-duty/professional use:	300 pound load capacity
Type I	Heavy-duty/industrial use:	250 pound load capacity
Type II	Medium-duty/commercial use:	225 pound load capacity
Type III	Light-duty/household use:	200 pound load capacity

Ladder Use and Requirements

Mt. Holyoke College employees are not authorized to build or use job-made ladders, ladder jacks or pump jacks unless as specifically approved for that job by the Director of Facilities Management and constructed in compliance with 1926.1053. The following general requirements apply to ladders and ladder use by Mt. Holyoke College personnel:

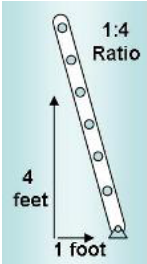
- Ladders must not be loaded beyond the manufacturer's rated capacity. Maximum load ratings are for the combined weight of user and materials.



- Only ladders meeting the appropriate ANSI Standard can be purchased and used. Only ladders with a Type II or higher rating should be used, with the exception of two-step step stools used by environmental services staff.
- When portable ladders are used for access to an upper landing surface, the side rails must extend at least 3 feet (0.9 m) above the upper landing surface. When such an extension is not possible, the ladder must be secured, and a grasping device such as a grab rail must be provided to assist workers in mounting and dismounting the ladder. A ladder extension must not deflect under a load that would cause the ladder to slip off its support.



- Ladders must be maintained free of oil, grease, and other slipping hazards.
- Fold-out or step ladders must be fully open with the spreader locked to hold it in the open position when in use. Step ladders can not be used as straight ladders.
- Ladders must be used only for the purpose for which they were designed.
- Ladders cannot be tied or fastened together to create longer sections, unless they are specifically designed for that purpose.
- Non-self-supporting ladders must be used at an angle where the horizontal distance from the top support to the foot of the ladder is approximately one-quarter of the working length of the ladder.
- When extending extension ladders, the minimum overlap of the sections of the ladder must be as follows:



Size of Extension Ladder	Section Overlap
Up to and including 36 feet	3 feet
Over 36 feet, up to and including 48 feet	4 feet
Over 48 feet, up to and including 60 feet	5 feet

- Fixed ladders must be used at a pitch no greater than 90 degrees from the horizontal, measured from the backside of the ladder.
- Ladders must be used only on stable and level surfaces unless secured to prevent accidental movement.
- If the ladder is equipped with slip resistant feet, make sure they are properly deployed parallel to the ground.



- Ladders must not be used on slippery surfaces unless secured or provided with slip-resistant feet to prevent accidental movement. Slip-resistant feet must not be used as a substitute for the care in placing, lashing, or holding a ladder upon slippery surfaces.
- Ladders placed in areas such as passageways, doorways, or driveways, or where they can be displaced by workplace activities or traffic must be secured to prevent accidental movement and a barricade must be used to keep traffic or activities away from the ladder.

- The area around the top and bottom of the ladders must be kept clear.

- Ladders must not be moved, shifted, or extended while in use.

- Ensure that all rung locks on extension ladders are properly engaged prior to ascending.



- Metal ladders cannot be used around electrical equipment. Ladders must have nonconductive siderails if they are used where the worker or the ladder could contact exposed energized electrical equipment. Use fiberglass or wooden ladders near power lines or electrical equipment.

- Cross-bracing on the rear section of stepladders must not be used for climbing unless the ladders are designed and provided with steps for climbing on both front and rear sections.



- When ascending or descending a ladder, the worker must face the ladder.

- Maintain three points of contact when ascending/descending the ladder. Each worker must use at least one hand to grasp the ladder when moving up or down the ladder.

- A worker on a ladder must not carry any object or load that could cause the worker to lose balance and fall.

- The top or top step of a stepladder must not be used as a step.

- Do not overreach or lean too far when on a ladder. A good rule to follow is to keep your belt buckle within the side rails of the ladder.

- Never place a ladder against a window pane or sash.

- When working outdoors, never use a ladder in high winds or inclement weather that could cause slippery conditions. Never work outdoors on a ladder during a lightning storm.

Storage

- Ladders should not be stored in areas where they will be exposed to excessive heat or damp conditions.
- Ladders should be stored in designated areas. In these areas, when possible, store ladders vertically. Secure ladders as needed to prevent falling and unauthorized use. If vertical storage is not possible, store a ladder horizontally where it is supported at several points, to prevent sagging.
- Ladders left in public areas should be placed horizontally along a wall so as not to obstruct traffic or cause a tripping hazard. Ladders should only be left in public areas when the work will resume within that work shift.

Fall Protection

Fall protection is not required for workers on portable ladders. When ascending or descending a ladder, the user must face the ladder. The user must use at least one hand to grasp the ladder (three points of contact) when progressing up and/or down the ladder and must never carry an object or load that could cause the employee to lose his/her balance and fall.

- Fixed ladders are considered to be “vertical” ladders. When the climb length on a fixed ladder is 24 feet or more, a self-retracting lifeline, cage (a barrier enclosing or nearly enclosing a ladder's climbing space and fastened to one or both of the ladder's side rails or to another structure.) or well (a permanent complete enclosure around a fixed ladder, which is attached to the walls of the well) is required. When the climb is less than 24 feet, but the top of the fixed ladder is more than 24 feet above lower levels, it must have a cage, well or self-retracting lifeline. If a fixed ladder is over 150 feet, a rest platform is required every 150 feet.
- Ladder floor openings will be protected by a standard railing, which consists of a top rail, toe board, intermediate rail and posts. The standard railing will be 42 inches from the floor or platform level to the top of the top rail and will be on all exposed edges except the entrance.
- All other requirements of the Mount Holyoke College Fall Protection Policy will be followed.

Inspection

- Ladders must be visually inspected by a competent person prior to each use to look for signs of damage or defects.
- A Ladder must also be thoroughly inspected after any incident that could affect its integrity, such as overloading, impact, or exposure to extreme temperatures.

Structural Defects

- Portable ladders with structural defects, (such as broken or missing rungs, cleats, or steps, broken or split rails, corroded components, or other faulty or defective components), must immediately be marked defective, or tagged with “Do Not Use” or similar language and withdrawn from service until repaired.
- Fixed ladders with structural defects, (such as broken or missing rungs, cleats, or steps, broken or split rails, or corroded components), must be withdrawn from service until repaired.
- Defective fixed ladders are considered withdrawn from use when they are:
 - immediately tagged with “Do Not Use” or similar language;
 - marked in a manner that identifies them as defective; and
 - blocked (such as with a plywood attachment that spans several rungs).
- Ladder repairs must restore the ladder to a condition meeting its ORIGINAL DESIGN criteria, before the ladder is returned to use.



Program Review

This program will be reviewed periodically by Facilities Management and Environmental Health & Safety to ensure compliance with OSHA regulations. Additionally, in the event of an incident involving a ladder, an accident investigation will be conducted to determine if procedures outlined in this policy were adhered to, and if there is new information or guidelines that can be implemented to improve this policy and our overall safety effort.

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