



Going Up and Down Safely – Tips for Ladder Use

During the winter months, families often use ladders to spread holiday cheer to the highest places, taking extra time to get those decorations just right. Unfortunately, as helpful as they are, people frequently underestimate the dangers associated with ladders – just last year, more than 163,000 people made emergency-room visits due to ladder accidents alone.

This year, make sure you and your family are ready to bring that special warmth into your home safely. Here are some simple guidelines from UL to help avoid injury and have a safe and bright holiday.

- **Each Ladder is Different - Read the Instructions** - The first step to using any ladder safely is to carefully read the manufacturer's instructions. They will contain guidelines that help you use ladders more safely and effectively and also advise you about the weight and height limits of the ladder.
- **Choose Wisely** - Choose the proper ladder for the intended task. For example, if the ladder will be used near electrical sources, use a wooden or fiberglass ladder to reduce the possibility of electrical shock.
- **Inspect Before You Step** - Inspect the ladder before stepping on the first rung. Make sure the ladder has been well maintained, that the rungs are clean and all parts are intact — never climb on a slippery or shaky ladder.
- **Make Sure It's Secure** - Setting up the ladder correctly may help prevent falls. When planting the base of any ladder, place all feet on a firm, level surface, not on rocks or boards. Spreaders, the devices that hold the front and back sections of a stepladder in an open position, should be completely open and locked before any weight is placed on the ladder.
- **Ladder Angle** - Don't Overdo it - When using an extension ladder, don't place the ladder at too extreme of an angle.
- **Look for the UL Mark** - Always look for the familiar UL Mark before purchasing a ladder. This Mark means that representative samples of that product have been tested and meet nationally recognized safety standards.
- **Size it Right** - Always use a ladder that is tall enough for the job at hand. A great number of ladder accidents are the result of using a ladder that is too short.
- **Get a Belt** – or a Helper - Don't carry equipment while climbing a ladder. Invest in a tool belt or have someone hand the equipment to you.
- **Face the Ladder** - Face the ladder when climbing up and down; keep your body centered between both side rails.
- **Don't Get Too Ambitious** - While up on the ladder, don't overextend your reach. Make sure you keep your weight evenly distributed.
- **Never Move a Ladder While Standing On It** - Always make sure people and equipment are off the ladder before moving or closing it.
- **Never Stand On a Ladder's Bucket Shelf** - Read and follow the warning stickers for highest standing levels.