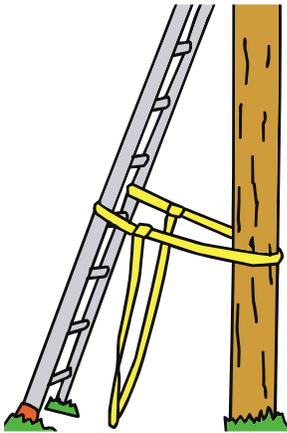


“Ladder Safety!”

(Provided by Safety Consultation and Training Section-Nevada Division of Industrial Relations)



Picture This! It's a blustery Las Vegas winter day. Someone is sitting a car waiting to go inside a building for an appointment when they see that there are workmen on the roof of the building. A ladder rests against the building and two men are working on the flat roof. One man turns to the roof edge, descends the ladder and walks away.

Suddenly, a big gust of wind blows the ladder down with a huge crash. Several minutes later the man on the ground comes back, picks up the ladder, leans it against the building wall, and climbs the ladder back up to the roof. In a moment, he is out of sight, probably working diligently on the roof with his partner. Another gust of wind bursts through mountain passes into the valley, whistles down the streets and between the buildings and the ladder again clatters to the ground.

Now, both employees are stuck on the roof with no way down. They find themselves peering over the edge of the roof where the ladder used to be, probably thinking to themselves, “Now how am I going to explain this to my boss!”

I know what you are thinking; this is some scene from a slapstick comedy, right? This is a true story. Luckily, for the men on the roof, the person who observed this, felt kindly and put the ladder back up so the men could get down.

What went wrong? Plenty! OSHA's Construction (29 CFR 1926, Subpart X) and General Industry (29 CFR 1910, Subpart D) Safety Standards have much to say about ladder safety. For example, in this case the ladder obviously should have been secured so it would not fall over and leave the men stranded, or worse injure someone struck by the falling ladder. Also both the general industry and construction safety regulations require that someone (a competent person if working in construction) check the ladder for defects. If defects are found it should be removed from service.

These individuals were lucky that someone was around to help them. Construction companies need to properly plan jobs, properly place and secure equipment and tools, and also plan for emergencies. Planning takes a little time, but can save valuable time in the long run.

Who among us does not use a ladder of some kind occasionally at work, or around your house? Are **you** using **your** ladder safely? For more insight into ladder safety, OSHA has developed an electronic tool (e-Tool) on its website. You can use this tool to find out more information on how to **safely** use ladders. The tool is found at the following web address:

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/construction/falls/4ladders.html>

