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Hospitality and Leisure

Ladder Safety Training Guide

This training guide applies to all hotel and hospitality team members who may be required to use a ladder in the performance of their duties — including but not limited to housekeeping, maintenance, banquet setup, and facilities personnel.

Understanding the Importance of Ladder Safety

Ladder-related injuries are among the most preventable workplace accidents in the hospitality industry, yet they continue to occur due to rushing, inattention, or shortcuts taken under the pressure of daily operations. Whether you are changing a light bulb in a guest corridor, retrieving supplies from a high storage shelf, or assisting with banquet décor, any task that requires elevation carries real risk.

A fall from even a modest height can result in serious injury — broken bones, head trauma, or worse — and the consequences extend beyond the individual to guests, team members, and the organization as a whole.

Understanding and following ladder safety procedures is not optional; it is a core part of every team member's professional responsibility.



Inspecting your Ladder Before Use

Before placing a ladder anywhere, every employee must conduct a brief but thorough inspection of the equipment. Check the rungs for cracks, bends, or missing hardware. Examine the side rails for damage or warping, and confirm that all locking mechanisms, spreader braces, and safety feet are intact and functioning properly. If a ladder shows any sign of wear, damage, or instability, remove it from service immediately by tagging it "Out of Order" and notifying your supervisor.

Never attempt to repair a damaged ladder yourself and never use a ladder that has been flagged as unsafe. Using defective equipment is one of the leading causes of preventable ladder falls.

Important Reminder

Any ladder marked "Out of Order" must not be returned to service without written clearance from your supervisor or the Facilities Manager. Do not remove or deface any safety tag placed on equipment.

Setting Up Safely

Proper setup is critical to a safe climb. Always position your ladder on a firm, level surface — never on carpet alone, uneven flooring, or a surface that may shift. For A-frame ladders, ensure all four feet are making full contact with the ground and that the spreader braces are fully locked open. For extension ladders used against a wall, follow the 4-to-1 rule: for every four feet of height, move the base one foot away from the wall. Clear the area around the base of any carts, trays, linens, or other obstacles, and whenever possible — have a second team member present to serve as a spotter. Post a warning sign or use a safety cone in high-traffic areas to alert guests and team members that work is in progress overhead.

Ladder Type	Key Setup Requirement	Common Error to Avoid
A-Frame / Stepladder	All four feet on firm, level ground; spreader braces fully locked	Placing on carpet or uneven tile without stabilizing
Extension Ladder	4-to-1 base rule; secured at top if possible	Setting base too close to wall, causing tip-over risk
All Ladder Types	Area clear of obstacles; spotter present; safety cone posted	Working alone in high-traffic guest areas without warning

Safe Climbing Practices

Once the ladder is set up correctly, follow the three-point contact rule at all times: keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand, in contact with the ladder as you climb. Never carry equipment, supplies, or tools in your hands while ascending or descending — use a tool belt, apron pocket, or have your spotter hand items up to you once you are positioned.

Do not lean, stretch, or reach beyond the sides of the ladder; if you cannot complete the task from your current position, descend and reposition the ladder. Never stand on the top two rungs of a stepladder or the top three rungs of an extension ladder. Move deliberately and keep your body centered between the rails at all times.

Three-Point Contact Rule — Quick Reference

At every moment while on the ladder, maintain **three points of contact**: either two hands + one foot, or two feet + one hand. Release only one point at a time to move. Never let go of both hands simultaneously.

Completing the Task and Storing Equipment

When your task is complete, descend carefully using the same three-point contact method, bringing any tools or materials down safely before your final descent. Once on the ground, fold, close, or retract the ladder fully before moving it to avoid catching it on overhead fixtures or doorways.

Carry the ladder with a team member when possible, especially in corridors where guests may be present, and return it promptly to its designated storage location. Log any equipment concerns or near-miss incidents in the department's safety log so that issues can be addressed before the next use.

Proper storage and documentation are the final steps of every safe ladder task — they protect your team members just as much as following the steps above protects you.

Safe Ladder Task Checklist

Consider using a checklist before, during, and after every task. All items should be confirmed prior to climbing.

1. **Ladder has been fully inspected — no cracks, bends, or missing hardware**
2. **All locking mechanisms and spreader braces are engaged and secure**
3. **Ladder is positioned on a firm, level surface with all feet in full contact**
4. **A-frame: spreader braces locked open; Extension: 4-to-1 rule applied**
5. **Base area is clear of carts, linens, trays, and any other obstacles**
6. **A spotter or second team member is present and attentive**
7. **Safety cone or verbal warning is in place in guest-traffic areas**
8. **Tools and materials are secured in a belt or pocket — hands are free to climb**
9. **Three-point contact maintained throughout ascent, task, and descent**
10. **Ladder is fully collapsed and returned to designated storage after use**
11. **Any concerns or near-misses have been logged in the department safety log**

Contact us for more information



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