



# BSA SAFETY MOMENT

## LADDER SAFETY

### SUMMARY

Missing that last step and overreaching are the two most cited factors in causes of ladder accidents, according to a 2016 study by the American Ladder Institute (ALI). These and similar types of accidents can be easily avoided by adopting the following precautions of basic ladder safety.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Best Practices for Safe Ladder Use

##### 1. Take Your Time Climbing Down—Don't Skip Any Steps

Exercise caution whether you are climbing down (or up) a ladder. Always face the ladder when climbing up or down, and be cautious until you're on the ground.

##### 2. Stay Within Your Reach

When working from a ladder, keep your center of gravity and body between the side rails. If you can't easily reach the project area once you have ascended the ladder, climb down and move the ladder more closely in alignment.

##### 3. Get the Right Sized Ladder for the Job

One of the factors in getting the right ladder for the job is length. A good rule of thumb when selecting a ladder is to calculate a person's maximum reach height, which is approximately four feet higher than the height of the ladder.

##### 4. Place Your Ladder on Firm, Level Ground

Be sure to clear trash, construction materials, and other obstructions away from the base and top of the ladder. The base of the ladder should be safely secured to prevent accidental movement. You can also use a ladder with non-slip feet or add outriggers or levelers to the bottom of an extension ladder to increase the footprint.

##### 5. Keep Three Points of Contact When Climbing Up or Down

To keep your balance, always maintain three points of contact—two hands and a foot or two feet and a hand—while climbing up or down a ladder.

### RESOURCES

- American Ladder Institute
  - Ladder Safety Checklist: [www.americanladderinstitute.org/resource/resmgr/Ladder\\_Safety\\_Checklist/ALI\\_10103-16\\_LadderSafetyChe.pdf](http://www.americanladderinstitute.org/resource/resmgr/Ladder_Safety_Checklist/ALI_10103-16_LadderSafetyChe.pdf)
  - Choosing the Right Ladder: [www.americanladderinstitute.org/page/Ladders101?](http://www.americanladderinstitute.org/page/Ladders101?)
  - Basic Ladder Safety: [www.americanladderinstitute.org/page/basicladdersafety](http://www.americanladderinstitute.org/page/basicladdersafety)
  - Online Ladder Safety Training: <https://laddersafetytraining.org>
  - Online Safety Teaching Resources: [www.laddersafetymonth.com/Safety-Resources/Online-Resources](http://www.laddersafetymonth.com/Safety-Resources/Online-Resources)