

Extension Ladders: Setup

Why it matters. Most ladder falls start with a bad setup: wrong angle, soft footing, or a ladder that is too short. Two minutes of setup prevents most of them.

KEY POINTS

1. Set the base about 1 ft out for every 4 ft of working length, the 4-to-1 rule (1926.1053(b)(5)(i)).
2. When used to reach an upper landing, side rails must extend at least 3 ft above it, or the top must be secured with a grab device (1926.1053(b)(1)).
3. Use the ladder on stable, level footing. Secure it if it could be displaced, and barricade it in busy areas.
4. Pick the right duty rating for your weight plus tools and material.
5. Use nonconductive side rails where you or the ladder could contact energized electrical equipment (1926.1053(b)(12)).
6. Inspect before use. Tag out and remove ladders with damaged rails, rungs or feet.

ASK THE CREW

- How do you check a ladder's angle quickly on site?
- What would make you say 'this ladder is too short for the job'?
- Where are our damaged ladders tagged and stored?

Reference: 29 CFR 1926.1053 | [osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.1053](https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.1053)

SIGN-IN

Date	Job site	Talk leader

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Supplements your safety program. Not a substitute for required training, a competent person, or the OSHA standards. Not legal advice. Check your state plan.