

news & notes

LADDER APP

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recently released a smartphone application for ladder safety, available for free download on iPhone and Android devices.

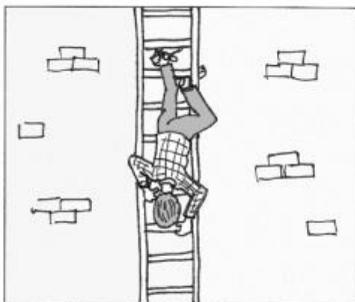
According to NIOSH, the app “uses visual and audio signals that make it easier for workers using extension ladders to check the angle the ladder is positioned at.” It gives the user feedback on positioning a ladder at the safest angle, and also provides references and a safety guide for extension ladder selection, inspection, accessorizing, and use.

So why does this matter to safety professionals?

Falls from ladders are a common source of workplace injuries, particularly in construction, and positioning a ladder properly is key to preventing these injuries.

NIOSH’s app aims to address this problem by helping those responsible for safe ladder use find the best position to minimize risk.

For more information and to download the app, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls>.



Ladder safety 101: Make sure you position your ladder with the correct end facing up.



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Going up?

Use ladders safely

Inspect all ladders before each use. Also inspect ladders following any tipovers or possible damage to a ladder that has been struck by something, hit something, or been dropped. Check to ensure that:

- Steps or rungs are in good repair and free of mud, grease, oil, or sticky substances;
- Side rails have no cracks or splits;
- Metal parts are lubricated;
- Rope is not worn or frayed;
- Spreaders or other locking devices are in place and working properly;
- Splinters or sharp edges have been filed down;
- Safety feet are solid and in place; *and*
- Metal ladders are free of dents and bent parts.

If you find a problem, don’t use the ladder. Remove it from service and tag it ‘DO NOT USE.’ Don’t try to repair it yourself. Report the problem to maintenance.

Once you have determined that the ladder is safe to use, set it up correctly.

- **Place the ladder on a firm, level surface**, and check to make sure the ladder is stable. Use wide boards under the ladder to give stability if the ground is soft.
- **Never set a ladder on top of a drum**, stack of pallets, or other object to gain more height. Use a taller ladder instead.
- **Never set up a ladder in front of a door** unless the door is locked or blocked—or you have a spotter on the other side.
- **Never lean a ladder against a surface that isn’t strong enough to support your weight**, such as a window.
- **Never fasten two ladders together**. Use a taller ladder or an extension ladder designed for two-ladder coupling.
- **Ensure the spreaders on stepladders are fully extended and locked in place** and that locking devices on extension ladders are secured.
- **Follow the 4-to-1 rule**: Place the base of the ladder 1 foot from the wall for every 4 feet (ft) between the base and the support point. For example, if it is 8 ft from the base of a ladder to its support point, the base of the ladder should be 2 ft away from the building.
- **Extend extension ladders at least 3 ft above a support point** such as the edge of a roof.
- **Ensure that the upper section of an extension ladder overlaps and rests on the bottom section**. The overlap should always be on the climbing side of the ladder. For ladders of 36 ft or more, the overlap should be least 3 ft.
- **Secure ladders** at the top and bottom.

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HEAT SAFETY APP

OSHA offers a new heat safety tool, available for iPhone, Blackberry®, and Android. The app allows a user to calculate a heat index for a worksite and provides information about appropriate protective measures.

The heat index, which takes both temperature and humidity into account, is typically considered a better measure of risk for heatstroke and other heat-related conditions than temperature alone.

Among the information included in the app are:

- **Signs and symptoms** of heat rash, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke
- **First aid and preventive measures** for heat-related illness
- **Guidelines** for water consumption, training, and gradual acclimatization to hot conditions
- **Risk factors** for heat-related illness

For more information and to download the app, visit www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/heat_app.html.



We're having a heat wave

Prevent heat illness

According to OSHA, thousands of workers become sick from exposure to heat every year, and some die. The good news is that with the proper preparation and training, illnesses and deaths can be prevented.

The three key words are **water, rest, and shade**. Understand that drinking water often, taking breaks, and limiting time in the heat and sun can prevent heat illness. Make sure to build up gradually to heavy work in hot conditions so you become acclimated. During the first week of working in hot temperatures, gradually increase workloads, and take more frequent breaks.

Know these symptoms of and procedures to treat heat-related illness:

- **Heat exhaustion**—wet skin, headache, weakness and dizziness, nausea and vomiting, and sometimes cramps. Move the worker to a cool environment, remove or loosen clothing, and increase fluids.
- **Heatstroke**—can be characterized by an absence of sweating, along with an extremely high body temperature, confusion, loss of consciousness, and/or convulsions. Reduce the body's temperature as quickly as possible with cool water or a sponge bath, and fan the body surface. Contact a physician immediately.

OSHA emphasizes that acting quickly can save lives. Make sure your workers and supervisors know what to look for and how to stay cool this summer.

Shock safety

Prevent electric shock on the job

Electric shock occurs when you touch a live wire, or a tool or machine part with poor insulation, and the ground. Shock can cause symptoms that range from mild to severe. They include:

- Pain;
- Loss of muscle control/coordination;
- Internal bleeding;
- Nerve, muscle, tissue damage;
- Cardiac arrest; *and*
- Death.

The longer you're in contact with live electricity, the greater the damage to your body. And, it doesn't take a large amount to hurt you. As little as 50 milliamperes (mA), just one-third the amount of electricity used to power a transistor radio, is enough to cause death. Here's how to prevent electric shock:

- If your machine malfunctions, report it to your supervisor immediately.
- Never open a "live" electrical panel. Keep all doors and access panels closed. If you discover an open panel, report it to your supervisor.
- Never reach into an electrical panel. Only trained maintenance workers or electricians should do this.
- If your employer has trained and authorized you to perform lockout/tagout and maintenance work on your machine, then make sure all sources of electrical energy are controlled in compliance with your employer's lockout/tagout program before doing maintenance work.