Falls cause 15% of all accidental deaths at the workplace, second only to motor vehicles. Ladders are commonly used to accomplish elevated work tasks and like any tool certain practices must be followed to ensure employee safety.

**General Ladder Safety Requirements:**

- Always inspect the ladder before use for damage (cracks, missing rivets, etc). Report damaged ladders to your supervisor and remove from service.
- Make sure you are working from a stable, dry, and level surface.
- Choose the correct ladder for the task.
- Maintain three points of contact with the ladder when ascending and descending.
- Always face the ladder when descending and ascending.
- Never reach when working from a ladder. Keep your belt buckle within the side rails at all times.

**Step Ladder Safety Requirements:**

- Step ladders can only be used in a locked, opened position.
- Never stand on the top two steps unless the ladder is specifically designed for using the upper steps as platforms.
- Never use a step ladder to access another level.
Extension or Straight Ladder Safety Requirements:

• To ensure a safe angle, the foot of the ladder should be ¼ the distance of the working length. Example: a 20’ extension ladder should have its base 5’ from the wall.
• When using an extension ladder to access another level, the ladder must extend 3’ past the landing surface.
• When setting up on a slippery or hard surface tie off or use a second person to foot the ladder while in use.
• Do not stand or work off of the top three steps of the ladder.
• Do not carry heavy objects on the ladder.

The Accident Numbers:

20% of all workplace fall injuries involve a ladder

57% of ladder fall victims are holding objects with one or both hands while climbing or descending (not maintain three points of contact)

53% of ladder accidents are caused by not securing or bracing (footing) the bottom of the ladder
Review / Discussion Questions:

1. As a rule your belt buckle should always be within the side rails of the ladder, why?
2. Can you use a step ladder in a folded position or to access another level? Why?
3. When do you inspect a ladder for damage? What do you do if you find a broken ladder?
4. Why is it important to minimize carrying material up and down a ladder (hint three points of contact)?

Questions, concerns or comments contact the EHS Director at extension 5504.