Ladder users follow the general safety rules while using ladders.

**General Ladder Safety Rules**

**General Use**

- Inspect ladder before using.
- Any staff using ladders must be trained per SBMS requirements.
- Ladders are to be used only for the purpose they were designed.
- Always face the ladder when ascending or descending.
- Always use three points of control when ascending or descending a ladder. Face ladder and use both hands to grip the rungs firmly. Use three-point control.
- Only one person at a time is permitted on a ladder unless the ladder is specifically designed for more than one climber.
- Never jump or slide down from a ladder or climb more than one rung/step at a time.
- Clean muddy or slippery boot soles before mounting a ladder.
- Do not move, shift, or extend a ladder while occupied. Never "WALK" a ladder.
- Do not carry tools or materials in your hand while climbing. Carry small tools in a tool pouch or raise or lower tools and materials using a hand-line.
- Do not overextend sideways. Use the Belt Buckle Rule: keep your belt buckle positioned between the side rails.
- Secure extension ladders before using (i.e., have another person hold ladder, tie side rails, etc.). Other ladders must be secured as needed.
- Read and carefully follow all instructions and warning labels that are on ladders.
- Defects on portable/mobile ladder must be reported to supervisor and tagged out.
- Do not climb a ladder if you are not physically and mentally up to the task.
- Defects to fixed must be tagged out and reported to supervisor.
- Do not exceed the duty rating, which is the maximum load capacity of the ladder.
• Do not set up a ladder in front of a door/doorway/ hallway/ etc., without erecting signs, barricades, locking doors, or having the area guarded.
• Be familiar with manufacturer’s instructions.
• Ladder use on a scaffold or working platform must be approved by a scaffold or fall protection competent person.

Handling of Ladders

• Get help with a ladder that is too heavy to handle alone.
• Ladders should be secured when transporting by vehicle.
• Ladders must not be tied or fastened together to provide longer sections, unless they are specifically designed for such use.
• Store ladders in a manner that prevents damage to the ladder. For example:
  ◦ Never paint a wood ladder.
  ◦ Never sit on ladder side rails.
  ◦ Never use a metal or fiberglass ladder which has been exposed to fire or strong chemicals, it should be discarded.
  ◦ Never store materials on a ladder.
  ◦ When practical, do not store ladders in sunlight, excessive heat, dampness, or other ultraviolet light sources.
  Note: Ladders that are stored in sunlight or in areas that have ultraviolet light sources should follow manufacturer recommendations for prolonging the life of the ladder. Consider replacing these ladders after five years from the receipt inspection date.
  ◦ Store ladders on racks, which give them proper support when not in use.
• No modifications must be made to ladders.
• Do not place ladders on boxes or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.

Working around electrical lines and electrical equipment

• Check the area carefully for power lines or other electrical equipment. Visibly locate all power lines. Pick a safe route to carry the ladder to the work area, then carry it horizontally - never upright.

  Note: Power lines and phone lines often appear similar. Assume all overhead wires carry electricity. Some overhead power lines are coated to extend the life of the line. The coating is not intended to protect against electrocution.

• Keep all ladders and other tools in the SAFE ZONE 10 feet from any overhead power lines. For lines rated over 50 kV., minimum clearance must be 10 feet plus 0.4 inch for each 1 kV. Measure from the end or tip of your own extended reach and including the end or tip of any object you are holding or carrying.
• If a ladder must be used within 10-ft of an overhead power line, the overhead line must be de-energized or put in a safe condition. Contact Electrical Utilities group.
• Before raising or extending any equipment capable of reaching a power line, check in all directions for power lines.
• Never place a ladder where it could slide into an overhead line. Make sure the distance to the nearest overhead line is at least twice the length of the ladder.
• Never lean the ladder against a tree or tree branch that is contacting or near a power line.

  Note: Any power line can permit electricity to flow into a piece of metal or other object, such as a wet tree branch, that touches it.
• Ensure ladders are kept clean and dry. Ladders should be cleaned of any build-up of dirt, grime, dust, grease, and other. Wet and dirty ladders can conduct electricity including wood ladders. Fiberglass ladders that have fiber bloom can conduct electricity.

**Note:** See the Safety Flash on Portable Fiberglass Ladder Care for further information.

• Portable ladders shift position - Never use a portable ladder on a windy day (i.e. winds sustained 25 MPH or more) a gust of wind can cause the ladder to shift and touch an overhead wire.
• Do not try to move a ladder that is in contact with an overhead power line. Contact LSS.

**Special Ladders**

• Do not use metal ladders when there is potential risk of contacting energized conductors or circuits.
• Wooden ladders must not be painted, however limited marking or stenciling is permissible.

**Step Ladders:**

• Do not use or stand or sit on a stepladder’s top or pail shelf or top step.
• Do not climb or stand on the back of a single-sided stepladder or rear bracing. It is not designed to carry a person's weight.
• Never use a stepladder that is not fully opened. Be sure the metal spreaders are locked.
• Do not use a stepladder as an extension (straight) ladder (i.e., closed) as it may slip out from under the person.
• Do not use the top two steps to stand. Do not stand higher than the step/rung indicated on the label marking the highest standing level.

**Mobile Ladder Stands:**

• Elevation provided by stand should not require over-reaching or standing on"tip-toes."
• Ladder stands and ladder stand platforms must never be moved while occupied.
• Additional height must not be gained by the addition of any type of extension or object being placed upon the unit.
• Handrails, when provided, should be used while ascending or descending. The user must face the steps while ascending or descending except when the slope of the steps is 50 degrees or less above the horizontal.
• Occupied units must not be placed in front of a door unless the door is secured in an open position, locked, attended or barricaded.
• Overreaching while on a unit can cause instability and result in a fall. Always place the unit in close proximity to the work. Descend from the unit and relocate it to avoid overreaching.
• Use Ladder Stands and Ladder Stand Platforms only on level surfaces. They are not to be used on uneven or sloping surfaces.
• Access to or egress from a Step or Platform from any other elevated surface is prohibited unless the unit has been positively secured against movement.
• Users are not permitted to stand on components of the unit other than the steps or platform.

**Single and Extension Ladders:**

• The top section of an extension ladder must never be used as a straight ladder. Ladders must not be tied or fastened together unless specifically designed for such use.
• Stand at the base when making length adjustments. Adjustments must not be made when the user is on the ladder.
• For obtaining proper ladder angle, placement of the ladder must be with a 1:4 lean ratio, i.e., 1 ft. out for every 4-ft. elevation. An exception to this would be areas of limited space.
• Ladders must be tied off whenever possible at or near the top for added stability. They must also be tied off at the bottom if there is difficulty in maintaining stability. When tying off or untying the top, or if the ladder cannot be tied off, someone on the ground should hold the ladder stable.
• Extension ladders up to 36 ft. in length require an overlap of the two sections of at least 3 ft.
• Ladder must be placed with both side rails supported, unless equipped with a single support attachment.
• The ladder must extend a minimum of 3 ft. above the landing area when accessing roofs, landings, or open floor levels.
• Do not stand above the third rung/step or higher than the step indicated on the label marking the highest standing level.
• Do not use an extension ladder as a lever, brace, support or hoist. This can damage the ladder.
• Do not use an extension ladder in the horizontal (flat) position. This may damage the ladder as it is not designed to support people or materials this way. You may also lose your balance and fall.

Articulating Ladders

• Follow manufacturer instructions.
• Ensure all locks are engaged before use.
• Follow requirements based on how articulating ladder is used (i.e., as a step ladder or extension ladder).

Fixed Ladders:

• Fixed ladders that do not have a valid inspection sticker must not be used until an inspection is completed by a competent inspector.
• Ladder safety systems (fall protection) may be used on tower, water tank, and chimney ladders over 20 ft. in unbroken length in lieu of cage protection. All ladder safety systems must be approved by a fall competent person and a qualified person (i.e. structural engineer). Fall protection training is required to use a ladder safety system.