



# Catholic Diocese of Arlington Ladder Safety Program (Name of location)

## 1. PURPOSE

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration created ladder guidelines and regulations under 1910 Occupational Safety and Health Standards, Section entitled, “Walking-Working Surfaces”. All diocesan locations must ensure that each ladder used meets the requirements of this program.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, ladders account for nearly 20% of fall injuries in the workplace, which makes them one of the most dangerous items in the workplace. This program provides the minimum safety requirements for protecting Diocesan employees, volunteers, and students from potential injuries associated with portable and fixed ladders. By following these basic safety principles and maintaining safety awareness, employees, volunteers, and students should be able to avoid serious injury.

Extending our reach higher than our physical ability requires step stools or ladders. The need for step stools is often ignored or determined to be too inconvenient and improper methods are used to gain the extra reach. Ladders are a tool that is regularly misused leading to injury or property damage.

Only ladders meeting ANSI A14.1 – ANSI A14.3, (Safety Codes for Ladders), shall be available for use.

## 2. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Each Pastor or principal**, or their designee has overall responsibility for the effective implementation of this program. The contents and requirements of this program shall apply to all staff, volunteers, students, and any contractors or vendors permitted to use ladders at (Name of location).

**Facility Managers and Special Event Coordinators** are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this program are effectively implemented in their areas of responsibility. These people must:

- Immediately implement measures to control any identified risks;
- Promptly removing equipment that is not safe or suitable for the intended purpose;
- Ensure all ladders are properly stored in designated areas;
- Ensure step stools are easily accessible and encourage proper use;
- Raise awareness in relation to the management the ladder program;
- Report ladder incidents; and
- Identifying training requirements across their area of responsibility.

**All Employees** have a responsibility to ensure that ladders are used safely in accordance with this program and best practices.

### 3. LADDER INSPECTION

#### A. Condition of Ladders

It is important to inspect the ladder before using it and identify any visible defects that could cause injury to an employee, volunteer, or student. All ladder surfaces must be free of puncture, or known hazards, such as missing hardware, before using. Wooden ladders may not be coated with any material that may obscure structural defects and all ladders shall be used only for the purposes for which they were designed.

All ladder rungs, steps and cleats (1910.23) must be:

- Parallel, level, and uniformly spaced when the ladder is in position for use;
- Spaced not less than 10 inches (25 cm) and not more than 14 inches (36 cm) apart, as measured between the centerlines of the rungs, cleats, and steps;
- Spaced not less than 8 inches (20 cm) apart and not more than 12 inches (30 cm) apart, as measured between the centerlines of the steps, on a stepstool;
- Set with a minimum clear width of 11.5 inches (29 cm) on portable ladders, 16 inches (41 cm) for fixed ladders, and 10.5 inches (26.7 cm) on stepstools;

The standard further requires any ladder with structural or other defects is immediately tagged "Dangerous: Do Not Use" or with similar language in accordance with §1910.145 and removed from service until repaired in accordance with §1910.22(d) or replaced.

#### B. Inspection

The Checklist located in Appendix A should be used when performing a ladder inspection. Most ladders can be evaluated by visual observance; however, it is important to open portable ladders and inspect the area where it will be used. Check the bolts or other hardware used to attach a fixed ladder to a wall or other structure are secure and still holding the ladder in place.

Portable ladders should be evaluated by the user prior to each use. Look for these issues when inspecting a ladder:

- Broken or loose rungs
- Rungs free of excess dirt and grease
- Side rail cracks, splits, bruised, dry rot and loose nails
- Hardware and fittings for secure attachment and damage
- Proper operation of locking devices and safety feet
- Damaged or worn non-slip base
- Underwriter's label and proper markings

Fixed ladders should be evaluated by the employee prior to each use. The employee shall inspect for:

- Broken, corroded, or loose rungs.
- Rungs free of excess dirt and grease
- Side rails for corrosion, fractures, and adequate anchoring at the base and top connection.
- All hardware and fittings for secure attachment.

#### 4. LADDER USE

Individuals using ladders should observe best practices when placing, ascending, descending, and using ladders. The following is a list of DO's and DON'Ts.

PROPER LADDER SAFETY	DO NOT DO THIS
Place the ladder so that both side rails have secure base.	Never lean a ladder against unsecured backing, such as loose boxes or tree limbs.
Place the ladder's feet on a level solid base, not on moveable objects.	Do not use ladders in a horizontal position as runways or as scaffolds.
When using a ladder for access to high places, secure the ladder to prevent it from slipping.	Never place a ladder in front of a door unless the door is blocked or guarded.
Extend the ladder 3 feet above the top of a landing.	Do not place a ladder against a windowpane or sash.
Allow only one person at a time on a ladder.	Do not overload a ladder.
Maintain three points of contact with the ladder (Two hands one foot or one hand two feet).	Use ladders with sufficient length and in proper position to not stretch or reach.
Carry tools on a tool belt or hoist them up once secure.	Do not use metal ladders around energized electrical circuits or equipment, or in places they may come in contact with electrical circuits.
Always face a ladder when ascending or descending.	Never slide down a ladder.
Be sure shoes are not greasy, muddy, or slippery before climbing.	Do not climb higher than third rung from the top on a straight ladder or second tread from the top on a step ladder.
Each employee uses at least one hand to grasp the ladder when climbing up and down it.	Do not carry any object or load that could cause someone to lose their balance and fall while climbing up or down the ladder.

#### 5. TRAINING

Those expected to use ladders must be trained on the use of ladders upon initial assignment and given a refresher training on a periodic basis. Annual training should include the following components:

- Ladder selection (match ladder to the task) pre-use inspection, ladder usage best practices, annual inspection and proper storage.
- How to inspect a ladder (and the use of the Pre-use Inspection form)
- Review of the Ladder Safety best practices (Section #4)
- What to do when a defect or other issue is discovered requiring repair
- Specific rules/regulations about ladder use at (Name of location).
- Proper storage and signage of usage forms.

Periodic refresher will be conducted annually and when warranted by an accident or other evidence of an individual's lack of understanding of the program. Volunteers, students, and staff should sign a logbook or a form confirming they are physically able and have been properly trained for the use of any ladder.

 <p><b>LADDER RULES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● ALWAYS FACE LADDER WHEN ASCENDING OR DESCENDING</li><li>● USE AT LEAST ONE HAND TO GRASP LADDER</li><li>● TOP OF LADDER SHOULD NEVER BE USED AS A STEP</li><li>● LADDER SHOULD NEVER BE MOVED, SHIFTED, OR EXTENDED WHILE OCCUPIED</li><li>● NEVER CARRY AN OBJECT OR LOAD THAT COULD CAUSE YOU TO LOSE YOUR BALANCE</li></ul>	<p><b>LADDER RATIO</b></p> <p>Follow the ladder's recommended angle guides for ladder safety.</p> <p>Use the <b>1:4</b> ratio to ensure a stable working platform. Place the base of the ladder 1 foot away of whatever it leans against for every 4 feet of height to the point where the ladder contacts at the top.</p>
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## RESOURCE

Additional information is available in the Office of Risk Management. Please email [riskmanagement@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:riskmanagement@arlingtondiocese.org) or call 703-841-2503.

# APPENDIX A



## Portable Ladder Safety Self-Inspection Checklist

Diocesan Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Inspection Performed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

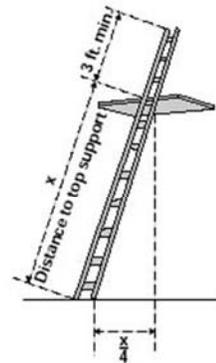
		Y	N	NA	Comments
<b>General Safety for Portable Ladders</b>					
1.	Inspected at regular, frequent intervals				
	a. No rungs/ steps missing or damages so as to make them unsafe.				
	b. Joints between steps and side rails tight and rungs do not move when twisted by hand				
	c. Hardware and fittings securely attached				
	d. Moveable parts operate freely without binding or undue play.				
	e. Safety feet and other auxiliary equipment in good condition.				
	f. No opaque coating which might obscure defects; labels on only one face of side rails.				
	g. Rope, if present, in good condition (not frayed or badly worn).				
	h. Spreader on step ladder in good condition.				
2.	Maintained free from oil, grease, or slippery materials				
3.	Set up at proper angle during use				
4.	Defective ladders withdrawn from service with warning label attached				
5.	Used only for intended purposes				
6.	Placed as to prevent slipping, or lashed or held position				
7.	Doors locked or guarded prior to placing ladder in front of door				
8.	Placed only on stable bases				
<b>Portable Wooden Ladders</b>					
1.	Free from sharp edges, splinters, visible defects				
2.	Step ladders do not exceed 20 feet in length				
3.	Single-section ladders do not exceed 30 feet in length				
4.	Two-section ladders do not exceed 60 feet in length				
<b>Portable Metal Ladders</b>					
1.	Prohibited use for work on exposed electrical conductors				
2.	Rungs must be corrugated, knurled, dimpled, or coated with non-slip coating				
3.	Step ladders do not exceed 20 feet in length				
4.	Single-section ladders do not exceed 30 feet in length				
5.	Two-section ladders do not exceed 48 feet in length				
6.	Ladders with more than two sections do not exceed 60 feet in length				
<b>Training</b>					
1.	Workers trained in proper use of and hazards related to ladders				
2.	Training provided for Electrical Safety-Related work practices when necessary				

## Portable Ladder Safety



Falls from portable ladders (step, straight, combination and extension) are one of the leading causes of occupational fatalities and injuries.

- Read and follow all labels/markings on the ladder.
- Avoid electrical hazards! – Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder. Avoid using a metal ladder near power lines or exposed energized electrical equipment.
- Always inspect the ladder prior to using it. If the ladder is damaged, it must be removed from service and tagged until repaired or discarded.
- Always maintain a 3-point (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand) contact on the ladder when climbing. Keep your body near the middle of the step and always face the ladder while climbing (see diagram).
- Only use ladders and appropriate accessories (ladder levelers, jacks or hooks) for their designed purposes.
- Ladders must be free of any slippery material on the rungs, steps or feet.
- Do not use a self-supporting ladder (e.g., step ladder) as a single ladder or in a partially closed position.
- Do not use the top step/rung of a ladder as a step/rung unless it was designed for that purpose.
- Use a ladder only on a stable and level surface, unless it has been secured (top or bottom) to prevent displacement.
- Do not place a ladder on boxes, barrels or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.
- Do not move or shift a ladder while a person or equipment is on the ladder.
- An extension or straight ladder used to access an elevated surface must extend at least 3 feet above the point of support (see diagram). Do not stand on the three top rungs of a straight, single or extension ladder.
- The proper angle for setting up a ladder is to place its base a quarter of the working length of the ladder from the wall or other vertical surface (see diagram).
- A ladder placed in any location where it can be displaced by other work activities must be secured to prevent displacement or a barricade must be erected to keep traffic away from the ladder.
- Be sure that all locks on an extension ladder are properly engaged.
- Do not exceed the maximum load rating of a ladder. Be aware of the ladder's load rating and of the weight it is supporting, including the weight of any tools or equipment.



### For more information:

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Administration  
U.S. Department of Labor  
[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) (800) 321-OSHA

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