



University of the Virgin Islands

UVICELL

SAFETY  PARADISE
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

OSHA Consultation Program

Three Simple Rules for Ladder Safety

With the holidays approaching and all that tree trimming and decorating to do, it would be a good idea to start thinking about ladder safety. You can go a long way toward safe work on ladders by remembering the following three simple rules of ladder use.



- Stay off the top. The higher you get on a ladder, the less stable is the platform. Self supporting ladders are designed to be used without putting your weight on the top platform or on the step immediately below that. The manufacturer even puts labels on the ladder warning against use of the top steps. Take a look for the labels next time you use a ladder.
- Maintain three points of contact. When going up or coming back down a ladder, always maintain three points of contact with the ladder. That means touching the ladder with 2 feet and 1 hand, or with 2 hands and 1 foot. This increases stability for both you and the ladder. Of course, following this rule will not allow you to carry things up or down the ladder. Have a co-worker hand you tools or supplies, or place them on the ladder shelf before climbing.
- Keep your belt buckle between the rails. You should never lean very far to either side of the ladder. Doing so will place your weight outside the support legs of the ladder and possible cause a tip-over. Since the center of gravity of your body is about at your belt buckle, just remember to keep your belt buckle between the rails of the ladder.

For more information on improving safety and health in your workplace, please contact the UVICELL Safety In Paradise office on St. Thomas at 693-1146, on St. Croix at 713-1619 or via email at safetyinparadise@uvi.edu.