

MORNING MEETING TOOLKIT

Holiday Hazards: Falls from Elevations

GOALS: *At the end of this session, your crew should be able to:*

- Know when to use a ladder and how to use a ladder

WHAT DO I NEED?:

- Timer on your phone

FLOW:

Ah, the holidays! Twinkly lights, evergreen wreaths, chirpy music, family gatherings... and hazards that don't apply to any other time of year. The best holiday gift is for all of your workers to come through the season healthy and whole, and ready to begin the new year!

Falls from Things That Are Not Ladders

- The first potentially dangerous mistake workers make is to not use a ladder at all. Instead, they may use office chairs, overturned waste baskets, plastic totes, shelf units, or other pieces of furniture or objects to get to places that are *just* out of reach. Forbid this practice. If workers need to reach something that is over their heads, they should use a step stool or small stepladder.

Falls from Ladders - Workers who do not usually climb ladders may do so during the holidays to hang lights and decorations. Falls from ladders—even relatively small stepladders—can cause serious injury or death, so remind workers of these ladder safety rules:

- *Choose the right ladder.* If your stepladder is not tall enough, use a straight ladder. If your straight ladder is not tall enough, use an extension ladder. Never fasten two ladders together to gain additional height.
- *Inspect your ladder.* Before each use, make sure that your ladder is not shaky, and that no parts are missing, broken, or damaged.
- *Give it a solid footing.* Make sure that your ladder is placed on a firm, level surface, not on a surface that is uneven or soft. Never set a ladder on top of another object, like a drum or a stack of pallets, to gain more height.
- *Give it a solid support.* Never lean a ladder against a surface that isn't strong enough to support your weight, such as a window or an object that might move under your weight.
- *Secure your ladder.* Secure your ladder at the top and bottom to prevent shifting.
- *Pay attention to your surroundings.* If you set up your ladder near a stairwell or in front of a door, take precautions to prevent dangerous foot traffic from destabilizing it. *Extend your spreaders and lock your extenders.* On stepladders, make sure the spreaders are fully extended and locked in place and that locking devices on extension ladders are secured.
- *Play the angles.* For stability, the base of a straight ladder should be 1 foot from the wall for every 4 feet between the base and the support point. For example, if it is 8 feet from the base of a ladder to its support point, the base of the ladder should be 2 feet away from the building.

- *Make a landing.* Extend extension ladders at least 3 feet above a support point such as the edge of a roof, so that you can get onto and off the ladder safely.
- *Go solo.* Only one person should be on a ladder at a time.
- *Maintain contact.* Always maintain three points of contact with the ladder—both feet and one hand, or both hands and one foot.
- *Wear a belt.* Don't carry tools or materials by hand when climbing up or down a ladder. Attach them to your belt, or use a block-and-tackle to raise them to your work level.
- *Keep moving.* Don't be tempted to reach too far while you're on a ladder. Get down, move the ladder, and then climb back up.

NOTES:

- Conclude by asking team any additional comment when working at elevations during the winter seasons.

