Ladders come in all shapes and sizes, so choose the proper ladder for the job. For example, never use a stepladder as a straight ladder, because it will tend to slip out from under you.

The following tips will help you avoid accidents:

- Ladders should not have cracks in their steps or vertical structures.

- Wooden ladders should not be painted, as the paint hides the cracks.

- Homemade or job-site-made ladders are allowed, but must be built according to OSHA Standard 1926.1053.

- Rungs/steps of ladders should always be kept free of oil, grease, or other slippery substances.

- Portable stepladders should not be longer than 20 feet.

- Steps should be a uniform distance apart—not less than 10 inches or more than 14 inches.

- Spacers should be installed between each step to help prevent step failure.

- Always stay at least 10 feet from overhead electrical lines, and never use aluminum ladders near them.

Safety Tip #5
While on a ladder, never step back to admire your work.
**Additional Information for Presenters**

Review the information provided on the reverse side of this safety tip sheet. Please refrain from reading the information verbatim—paraphrase it instead.

**Talking Points:**
According to the National Safety Council *Injury Facts 2004*, the second-leading cause of death by electrocution at home is contact between ladders and electrical components or lines. OSHA has responded to many injuries and deaths due to improper ladder use.

**OSHA Standards That May Apply:**
- 1910.21 through 1910.30  General industry
- 1926.1050 through 1926.1060  Construction industry

**Links:**
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration
  [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)
- National Safety Council
  [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)
- Construction Safety Council
  [www.buildsafe.org](http://www.buildsafe.org)

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