

## LADDER SAFETY TRAINING

Ladders are one of the most commonly misused tools resulting in accidents. OSHA requires that people using ladders must have training which enables users to recognize hazards related to ladders.

**Each volunteer using any ladder as part of the Master Gardener Program, the Clallam 4-H program, or gleaning must be certified in ladder safety. For questions contact WSU Clallam Extension at 360-417-2279.**

### To receive certification:

1. Watch the following online video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcsdVup8NzA&feature=youtu.be>
2. Read through the safety rules below for regular and orchard ladders.
3. Complete and return the attached written test to the extension office.

Optional Reading: OSHA Ladder Safety Training Standards: [eLCOSH : Ladder Safety](#)

### Safety Rules

Step Ladders and Orchard Ladders are the only two types of ladders that may be used by volunteers in the MG, 4H or gleaning programs.

#### Regular Ladders

- Be sure the ladder being used has the proper duty rating (weight capacity) to carry the combined weight of the user and the materials carried. Check the duty rating sticker on the side of each ladder to make sure you are in compliance.
- Always inspect all part of the ladder for safety before using it.
- Never use a defective ladder. Tag it “defective” and remove it from the work area.
- Setup the ladder so it rests firmly and evenly on the ground. Always have a stable base.
- Climb ladders safely facing the ladder, use both hands to grip the ladder,
- Never carry heavy load up a ladder. Climb up yourself and pull up the material with a rope.
- Overreaching is probably the most common cause of falls from the ladder. A good rule is to always keep your belt buckle inside the rail of the ladder.
- Do not try to move a ladder while you are on it by rocking.
- Store ladder on racks, which give them support, when not in use.

#### Orchard Ladders

For optimal stability on uneven ground, utilize tripod ladders to pick fruit or to prune trees. Tripod ladders have two side rails and a third leg provides additional stability and helps place the ladder securely on uneven ground. Although tripod ladders are the safest when working in these conditions, do not become complacent to safety rules.

At the beginning of ladder use, a volunteer using a tripod ladder should conduct a safety check. Check for the following conditions:

- Cracked metal
- Excessive mud, oil or other debris on side rails or rungs
- Broken or missing rivets (check both the top and bottom of rivets)
- Bent or twisted braces
- Tightened connections with the top cap and side rails
- Hinge connection of the tripod leg
- Employees should then check the second side rail from the top to the bottom for the same conditions.
- The tripod leg needs to be checked for dents or bends that will affect the stability of the ladder
- The ladder should be turned over and each side rail should be checked for defects
- Finally, each rung should be twisted to make sure it's securely attached

Once ladder inspection is complete, use safe ladder transporting techniques. Place arm and shoulder through the ladder, balancing the ladder on a shoulder securely so it does not swing out. Keep your hands away from the rungs to avoid finger injury. Be aware of trip hazards such as branches, holes, irrigation pipe, mud, or other debris. Beware of overhead electrical lines.

Proper ladder set up is an essential safety step. Examine the ground and select an area where the earth is firm, not loose, wet, or uneven. Look for rocks and debris that could cause the feet of the ladder to become unstable. Place the side rails firmly into the soil and test for stability and ideally, place the tripod at a 75 degree angle. Perform a quick test for the appropriate angle by placing your feet in between the side rails' feet and extending your arms to touch the ladder. If the ladder is too close to the arms, the angle is greater than 75 degrees, and if it is too far away from the arms, it is less than 70 degrees. Wider or narrower openings can cause ladder instability.

Place the side rails facing the base of the tree to provide stability in the event that the ladder begins to tip and always use the tripod rather than leaning the ladder on a tree limb. When working on sloped terrain, place the tripod upslope to provide added stability. While working on a cross slope, place the tripod in alignment with the lower side rail.

Once the ladder is set up properly, it's ready to use the ladder in a safe manner.

- Ascend and descend facing the ladder
- Hold onto the side rails and not the rungs
- Begin harvesting fruit at the top of the tree and work down. (This way, you will be descending the ladder as the fruit bag becomes fuller rather than ascending the ladder)
- Rest the fruit bag on the rungs to reduce back strain
- Empty the fruit bag before it becomes too heavy or full
- Never lean too far because this will affect center of gravity
- Wear proper fitting clothing that will not catch onto the ladder or tree branches
- Pay attention to muddy shoes as this could lead to slipping and falling off of the ladder
- Do not use a branch or limb to extend reach
- Move ladder by picking it up
- Avoid sitting or stepping on the top cap or first step
- Do not use a cell phone while on the ladder

## Ladder Safety Written Test

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE COMPLETED: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Ladders need to be inspected annually. True or False
2. Skinny Minnie weighs only 180 pounds when fully dressed. She is picking pears which she has in a bucket on the pail shelf of the stepladder. She has 15 pounds of pears in the bucket. The ladder weighs 20 pounds. She is within the weight limit of the 200 pound duty rating. True or false
3. Eagle Eye Ed spots a beautiful apple to his left while on the orchard ladder. He keeps both feet on the ladder rung. He has one hand on the rail of the ladder. Keeping his belt buckle just inside the rails of the ladder, he carefully reaches out and just makes the grab to snag that apple. He acted safely. True or False
4. What is the most common cause of accidents related to ladders?
  - A. Improper use of a ladder for weight capacity.
  - B. Wearing high heel shoes when climbing a ladder.
  - C. Overreaching when on a ladder.
  - D. Using a broken wood ladder.
5. You can carry a heavy load up a ladder if you are careful. True or False
6. Never use an orchard ladder on sloping ground. True or False
7. It is ok to step out on a large stable branch to reach an objective. True or False
8. It is OK to keep an untreated wood ladder outside for storage. True or false
9. It is OK to climb a ladder facing in and to descend facing out. True of False
10. To find your 70 to 75 degree angle when using an orchard ladder, proceed as follows: While on the ground, place your toes at the base of the ladder. Reach your hands strait in front of you. Your fingertips should just touch the rails of the ladder. True or false