## LADDER SAFETY

[Organization Name] places the health, safety and well-being of all workers and volunteers as its highest priority and will ensure employees who are working with ladders are following safety protocols. We understand the organization holds the highest responsibility for the safety of the workplace and will take all steps needed to provide a healthy and safe working environment.

[Organization Name] adheres to the requirements set out in the Northwest Territories *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* and any other applicable legislation.

DEFINITIONS/TYPES OF LADDERS

Types of Ladders

There are two types of ladders:

* Non-self-supporting ladders include:
	+ A combination ladder. It is a portable ladder that can be used as a step ladder or extension ladder.
	+ An extension ladder. It has two or more sections that can be locked together, allowing length adjustments.
* Self-supporting ladders include:
	+ A platform ladder.
	+ A step ladder that is generally not adjustable in height.
* A mobile ladder stand or platform.

POLICY

[Organization Name] will uphold all requirements set out in the Northwest Territories *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* and will ensure all employees and managers are provided with information and safety protocols for the safe usage of ladders in the workplace.

Employer Responsibilities

[Organization Name] will:

* Provide ongoing and updated training to all employees who work with ladders on their safe use, ensuring training is repeated annually or as new types of ladders are introduced.
* Ensure that the ladder safety policy is readily accessible to all employees.
* Conduct thorough hazard assessments prior to the use of any ladders to ensure they are appropriate for the task, securely placed, and meet all local regulatory requirements.
* Provide written instructions for working safely with hazards that cannot be eliminated
* Establish procedures for reporting, investigating, and documenting incidents and injuries, and include these in the training for employees
* Ensure that trained personnel conduct thorough inspections of all ladders before each use, checking for defects such as cracks, loose rungs, or damaged side rails.
* Ensure ladders are maintained and free from oil, grease, and other slippery substances to prevent accidents. This includes ensuring regular cleaning of ladders to remove any potentially hazardous materials.
* Ensure ladders are stored securely when not in use to prevent them from falling over or being damaged, which also extends their lifespan and maintains their safety for use.
* Ensure all employees are informed about the ladder manufacturer's specifications and receive training on safe ladder use, specifically on the use of non-conductive ladders near energized equipment, compliant with the detailed safety standards and regulations of the Northwest Territories.
* Ensure workers do not use a ladder to enter or leave an elevated or sub-level work area if the area has another safe and recognizable way to enter or leave it.
* Ensure wooden ladders are never painted. However, wooden ladders may be preserved with a transparent protective coating.
* Ensure a crawl board or roof ladder used for roof work (a) is securely fastened by hooking the board or ladder over the ridge of the roof or by another equally effective means, and (b) is not supported by an eavestrough.
* Ensure any fixed ladder made of a material other than steel is certified by a professional engineer to meet or exceed Northwest Territories’ safety requirements and strength necessary for its intended use.
* Ensure a self-closing double bar safety gate or an equally effective barrier is provided at ladderway floor openings and platforms of fixed ladders.
* Require the use of a personal fall arrest system for any worker operating from a portable ladder at heights of 3 meters or above, as mandated by Northwest Territories safety regulations, without exceptions.
* Strictly enforce the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) as required by Northwest Territories safety regulations for ladder usage, particularly under conditions of elevated risk such as on construction sites or in proximity to electrical installations.
* Periodically review and audit ladder safety practices and compliance with Northwest Territories regulations, incorporating findings into continuous improvement of safety protocols.

Employee Responsibilities

Workers must:

* Ensure ladders are appropriate for the task
* Inspect ladders before use
* Face the ladder and stay between the side rails while climbing
* Place the ladder at a safe angle
* Secure ladders that extend beyond 3 metres in height using stabilizing devices or securing mechanisms to prevent movement, as mandated by the Northwest Territories’ safety regulations.
* When using portable ladders, ensure
	+ the ladder is secured against movement and placed on a base that is stable
	+ the base of an inclined portable ladder is no further from the base of the wall or structure than 1/4 of the distance between the base of the ladder and the place where the ladder contacts the wall, and;
	+ the side rails of a portable ladder extend at least 1 metre above a platform, landing or parapet if the ladder is used as a means of access to the platform, landing or parapet
* Use only ladders made of non-conductive materials when working within 3 metres of electrical lines to prevent electrical hazards, in accordance with Northwest Territories’ safety standards.
* Not perform work from either of the top 2 rungs, steps or cleats of a portable ladder unless the manufacturer’s specifications allow the worker to do so.
* Adhere to all safety signs, instructions, and barriers related to ladder use.
* Consistently use PPE and necessary safety gear like fall arrest systems as required, especially when working at heights, following specific requirements set by Northwest Territories’ safety regulations.
* Never use a non-fixed ladder without having another person present to secure and stabilize it, ensuring adherence to Northwest Territories’ safety requirements.
* Participate in all required safety training sessions and demonstrate understanding of the training provided.
* Report any unsafe conditions or defects in ladders immediately to their supervisors.
* Maintain at least three (3) points of contact with the ladder at all times (two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand) unless a secure position is necessary for a brief duration.
* Ensure they do not overreach while on a ladder. Moving the ladder closer to the work is safer than reaching beyond a stable stance.

General Guidelines and Procedures

DOs:

* Choose the correct ladder for the task.
* Review the manufacturer’s instructions.
* Ensure the ladder is in good condition by inspecting it prior to use.
* Set up the ladder properly and on a stable surface.
* Wear any applicable personal protective equipment such as proper footwear, helmet, harness etc.
* Make sure the ladder is placed on a stable surface.
* Ensure there are no electrical outlets, overhead wires or other safety hazards in proximity to the ladder.
* Keep ladders clean and free from oil and grease.
* Store the ladder and make sure it is secured from falling over.

DON’Ts:

* Use a ladder without proper training, PPE or clothing.
* Use a ladder when feeling unwell.
* Move or slide while on a ladder.
* Overreach while on a ladder. If you have to overreach, come down safely off the ladder and reposition the ladder to where you need it.
* Use self-supporting ladders as a non-self-supporting single ladder.
* Place ladders on items such as bricks, boxes, barrels or unstable bases.
* Connect or tie-together ladders unless approved by the manufacturer.
* Place ladders in front of doors unless the door is open, locked or guarded.
* Climb up to the top support point or as labelled on a non-self-supporting ladder.
* Leave ladders erect and unattended.

Safe climbing and working on ladders

* Position yourself and stay in the middle of the step or rung to maintain balance. Avoid overreaching. The general rule of thumb is to keep your belt buckle in between the side rails.
* Do not stand or climb higher than the level indicated on the label.
* Do not stand on the top cap, top step, pail shelf, or the rear braces of a self-supporting ladder.
* When climbing up or down a ladder, you must face the ladder and maintain 3 points of contact: two feet and one hand or two hands one foot. It is dangerous to carry items in both hands while climbing up and down a ladder.
* Your hands must be free while climbing, so consider other options to transport tools and other items such as tool belts, backpacks, or raising materials using a rope and container.

When accessing upper levels from a ladder:

* The top of the ladder must be securely fastened by hooking the ladder over the ridge of the roof or by another equally effective means.
* Before accessing the roof or upper level, make sure the ladder is tied down or secured to avoid movement, slipping, or shifting.
* When getting off and on the ladder, make sure the ladder does not move.

When using step ladders and step stools:

* When climbing up and down these ladders while carrying something, make sure that what you are carrying will not affect your ability to climb up and down:
	+ You must maintain balance, and
	+ The object must not obstruct your view.
* When you are on the ladder:
	+ Keep hands above knee level when reaching down to grab items.
	+ Keep belt buckle within the outer edges of side rails when reaching sideways, this will ensure you do not overreach.
	+ Avoid leaning backward while moving objects.
	+ Avoid going on toes when reaching above.
* When you are standing on the ladder, keep both feet on the ladder.
* Lifting and moving of materials should only be done when allowed by manufacturer’s instructions and when safe to do so.
* Ensure the maximum weight you are carrying with one hand is comfortable and manageable for you.

When using step, platform, and trestle ladders:

* When climbing up and down, face the ladder, use both hands, and maintain three-point contact. That means having two hands and one foot OR using two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder.
* When on the ladder
	+ Keep hands above knee level when reaching down to grab objects.
	+ Keep belt buckle within the outer edges of side rails when reaching sideways.
	+ Avoid leaning backward while moving objects.
	+ Avoid going on toes when reaching above.
* When standing on the ladder:
	+ Stand no higher than the top step indicated by the manufacturer.
	+ Keep both feet on the ladder.
* Lifting and moving of materials should only be done when allowed by manufacturer’s instructions and when safe to do so.
* The maximum weight to be lifted with one hand may range depending on your capabilities.
* The maximum weight to be lifted with two hands below shoulder height may range depending on your capabilities.

When using mobile stand and platform ladders:

* When climbing up and down, use handrails, and face the proper direction according to the manufacturer.
* Only carry objects if allowable as outlined by the manufacturer ensuring that it does not impair your ability to:
	+ climb or descend,
	+ maintain balance and field of view.
* When on the ladder:
	+ Keep hands above knee level when reaching down to grab objects.
	+ Keep your belt buckle within the centre of the ladder when reaching sideways. Remember that your belt buckle must stay within the outer edges of side rails to ensure you maintain balance and do not overreach.
	+ Avoid leaning backwards while moving objects.
	+ Avoid going on toes when reaching above to place an object.
	+ Keep both feet on the ladder.
* Lifting and moving of materials should only be done when allowed by manufacturers’ instructions and safe to do so.
* When working on mobile ladder stands, you must be readily able to achieve three points of contact with the ladder at any time.
* When using a mobile ladder stand or platform.
	+ Do not overreach.
	+ Avoid forceful or pushing/pulling movements where there is the potential for an unexpected reaction.

When setting up extension ladders:

* Lay the ladder on the ground close to the area of use.
* Brace ladder with the object or another person’s feet.
* While grabbing the top of the ladder, raise the ladder over your head walking toward the base of the ladder.

When using an extension and single ladders which includes sliding, fixed, portable:

* When climbing up and down, face the ladder and use both hands to maintain three-point contact: that would be two hands and one foot OR two feet and one hand.
* When on the ladder:
	+ Keep hands above knee level when reaching down to grab items.
	+ Keep your belt buckle within the outer edges of side rails when reaching sideways.
	+ Avoid leaning backward while moving objects.
	+ Avoid going on toes when reaching above.
* When standing on the ladder:
	+ Stand no higher than the top step indicated by the manufacturer.
	+ Keep both feet on the ladder.
* You can lift or move objects when on a ladder only when safe to do so and allowed by the manufacturer.
* When working on the ladder use only one hand to receive, lift, move items while maintaining three-point contact (two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder)

Factors to consider in selecting the appropriate ladder:

When selecting the right ladder, [Organization Name] and employees must ensure ladders adhere to Northwest Territories standards. They must also consider consider:

* The task and location of the work to be done
* Worker factors including an individual's size and weight
* Weight of tools and equipment
* Forces and loads applied when working on the ladder
* Ladder designed use and load/weight rating

In working near electrical wires or equipment, workers must use ladders that are made of a non-conductive material.