

# Keep Aluminum Ladders Away From Electricity



Aluminum ladders are lightweight and easy to use.

But aluminum ladders have one major drawback-they conduct electricity more readily than ladders made of other materials such as wood or fiberglass.

That is why they should never be used for any sort of electrical work-even for changing a light bulb. They should never be used in any area where there is danger of them contacting an electrical source such as overhead power lines or light fixtures.

## Here are some things to look for before you use an aluminum ladder:

- Check for defects such as dents and twisting.
- Make sure all the rungs are tight in the side rails and that any bracing is in good condition.
- On aluminum extension ladders, also check ropes, pulleys and fittings to make sure they are secure and in good condition.
- Check for signs of damage. A ladder which has been dropped or exposed to fire may be unsafe to use.
- Make sure that the anti-slip footings on the ladder are in good condition and are not loose.
- If you find any defects in an aluminum ladder (or any other kind of ladder), remove it from service and tag it so that it can be inspected, repaired or destroyed.

## Here are some general tips for safe use of ladders, including aluminum models:

- Choose the right ladder for the job, one which is neither too long nor too short.
- Put the ladder on a level, solid surface.
- If it's a straight ladder, extend it at least three feet above the top support.
- Remember the 4 to 1 ratio. For every 4 feet up, the base of the ladder should be 1 foot out.
- On an extension ladder, the sections should overlap by a minimum of three feet, with more overlap for longer ladders.
- Tie or secure the top of the ladder. If this is not possible, tie off the bottom or have someone hold it.
- Always face the ladder and use both hands when climbing up or down.
- With a step-ladder, do not step on the top two steps. With a straight ladder, do not step on the top four rungs.

- To avoid tipping the ladder to the side, always try to keep your body within the siderails of the ladder. Do not lean to either side.
- Wear non-skid, well-fitting footwear which is free of grease or mud.
- Carry tools on a belt or hoist them up, and hoist up materials as well. Do not carry them in your hands.
- Do not paint ladders because it is difficult to see defects or damage when they are covered by paint.

Follow these general guidelines to use a ladder safely. Keep all ladders away from overhead wires and electrical fittings. Don't use aluminum ladders around any electrical installation.