

Ladder Use JHA

Completed instructional example | Edition v1.0 | October 6, 2026

Learning and planning resource. Adapt with the people doing the work, verify actual controls and follow required authorization. This document supplies no completed field inspections, signatures or work approval.

Work and worksite

Fictional example: a construction worker uses a manufactured extension ladder for occasional access to a small, protected elevated platform. The ladder is not the work platform: fastening and two-handed tasks occur after the worker reaches the guarded area. A nearby passage must remain controlled. This example excludes fixed ladders, roof work, electrical work, scaffold erection, and improvised ladders. The access choice must be reconsidered if traffic, duration, or the worker's needs make a ladder unsuitable.

- Establish the landing height, access frequency, carried equipment, worker and tool load, available setup space, and the method of securing the ladder.
- The ground and top support must be assessed for stability; the landing and its opening need their own protection and a safe transition.
- Identify overhead and electrical exposures throughout carrying, raising, and use. Nonconductive side rails do not replace control of electrical hazards.
- Provide ladder training by a competent person and required inspections. This example also calls for a user pre-use check; report defects and prevent use of defective equipment.

Actual project records needed: Location, crew and responsible people; equipment models and instructions; permits/releases; emergency arrangements; actual checks and approvals.

Task | Hazard | Control | Verification

Select the access method and ladder

Hazard: A short, overloaded, or unsuitable ladder encourages overreaching, carrying bulky loads, or climbing from improvised support.

Control: Compare a ladder with stairs or another suitable access arrangement. Select a manufactured ladder of appropriate type, length, capacity, and material. Arrange separate transfer of bulky tools and materials rather than carrying them while climbing.

Verification: The supervisor verifies suitability for this worker, access frequency, landing, load, and task before choosing the ladder.

Reasoning: A ladder JHA should first decide whether a ladder is the right method.

Inspect and transport the ladder

Hazard: A cracked rail, damaged lock, contaminated rung, or uncontrolled long ladder causes a fall or strikes others.

Control: Check rails, rungs, feet, extension locks, rope, labels, and contamination under the manufacturer's instructions. Mark defective equipment and withdraw it from service. Plan carrying and raising with adequate people and clearances.

Verification: The user verifies condition and the carry path; the competent person handles periodic and post-event inspection requirements.

Reasoning: A pre-use check can find transport damage that occurred after the last recorded inspection.

Establish the base and isolate the passage

Hazard: The base slips or is displaced by a door, person, or vehicle; unstable packing causes tipping.

Control: Prepare stable support and keep the top and bottom clear. Secure against displacement or barricade the adjacent traffic exposure. Use the specified feet and setup method; do not gain height with boxes or improvised packing.

Verification: Confirm the passage is controlled and the ladder can be set without obstructing required emergency access.

Reasoning: A warning sign alone does not physically resolve a door opening into the ladder.

Set the angle and secure the landing access

Hazard: A steep or shallow angle increases sliding or backward-fall risk; an unsupported transition causes loss of balance.

Control: For this manufactured non-self-supporting ladder, set the horizontal setback at about one-quarter of its working length, measured along the ladder between foot and top support. Provide at least three feet of side-rail extension above the landing in this planned setup and secure the ladder.

Verification: Check the manufacturer angle indicator/instructions, both top support points, restraint, extension, and protected landing transition before climbing.

Reasoning: Working length is not the label's total ladder length; landing protection remains a separate check.

Climb and transfer to the protected platform

Hazard: A carried object interferes with grip; the worker falls while turning or stepping through an unprotected opening.

Control: Face the ladder and maintain secure hand contact while climbing. Use three-point contact as the climbing practice and transfer bulky items separately. Follow the planned landing transition without defeating its protection. Do not shift or extend an occupied ladder.

Verification: The worker confirms clean footwear, a clear landing, secured tools, and the ability to maintain stable contact before ascent.

Reasoning: The transition needs as much planning as the climb because the body moves between two supports.

Descend, remove, and store

Hazard: A changed base area obstructs descent; removing the ladder leaves an open access point or strikes a passerby.

Control: Check the route again before descent. Maintain access for anyone still above. Remove the ladder using controlled handling only after the area is released; restore the landing barrier and store the ladder against damage.

Verification: The responsible person confirms nobody depends on the access and that the elevated area is left protected.

Reasoning: Removing access too early can create a new hazard for the next person.

Pause and reassess

- Reassess for wet or icy surfaces, wind, shifted supports, nearby electrical work, or uncontrolled traffic.
- Change the method for frequent two-way access, heavy material transfer, sustained work from rungs, or a worker unable to use the planned arrangement safely.

Correct the condition, revise the analysis, communicate the change and obtain required authorization before restarting.

Improve the control

Needs improvement: Ladder: use three points of contact.

More useful: First choose suitable access, inspect and secure the ladder, protect the landing, and arrange material transfer; then define the climbing practice.

Needs improvement: Set at 4:1.

More useful: Use the manufacturer setup guidance and approximately one-quarter of the ladder's working length as horizontal setback for this extension ladder.

Decisions that change the analysis

The correct ladder cannot fit without blocking the doorway. What now?

Change the access arrangement or establish effective control of that doorway while preserving required egress. Do not accept a poor angle just to make it fit.

The worker must carry a large box up. Is a careful climb enough?

No. Arrange separate material transfer or select a suitable alternative access/handling method before the climb.

References and adaptation

OSHA 1926.1053: Ladders

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.1053>

OSHA 1926.1060: Ladder training

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.1060>

OSHA: Safe use of extension ladders

<https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3660.pdf>

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This original walkthrough was informed by review of uploaded examples, then rewritten for the stated fictional scenario using current primary references. It does not reproduce a source document or its approval record.

Walkthrough and draft builder: <https://www.toddjeromejenkins.com/jha-jsa-examples/ladder-use-jha>