

Ladder-to-Roof Transitions: Protect the Step Between

Todd Jerome Jenkins | v1.0 | October 12, 2026 | Discussion + field verification

Why this matters

The ladder, landing and protected roof route must work together. A sound ladder alone does not establish a safe transfer or a way back down.

Objective: Explain and verify the protected transition before climbing.

Key hazards or failure points

Unsecured support; inadequate handhold; blocked landing; exposed roof edge; carried loads; a return route changed by deliveries.

Practical controls

- Use an access arrangement suited to the ladder, landing and roof work. Establish required roof protection before the transfer.
- Verify the required rail extension or permitted secured-top and grasping-device alternative under the portable-ladder rule. Follow the actual ladder instructions.
- Keep the landing and return route clear. Arrange material movement without compromising climbing; coordinate any ladder removal with affected crews.

Verify It in the Field

From protected locations, verify support, securing and the upper-landing arrangement against the ladder instructions and applicable access requirements.

Have the responsible person verify protection across the transfer and roof route. Do not climb into an unverified position to inspect it.

Walk through the planned hand and foot sequence verbally from safety. Confirm tools and deliveries do not occupy the transition.

Stop and reassess

Hold access for an unclear transfer, shifted ladder, obstructed return, damaged components or missing protection. Correct and recheck from safety before use.

Ask the crew

1. Where does protection change during the transfer?
2. How will tools reach the roof?
3. Who must know before access is moved?

Use this HOP tool — Critical-step pre-job briefing: From a safe position, describe the climb, transfer and return in order. Name where a handhold or protection could be lost. Have the responsible person resolve that point against the approved arrangement before anyone demonstrates the sequence at height.

Sources: OSHA 1926.1053, 1926.1051, 1926.501; DOE Vol. 2, pp. 34–37. HOP concepts adapted from DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Vol. 2 (June 2009). No claim to original U.S. Government work; no government endorsement implied.

Free next step: JHA/JSA planning and field-verification worksheet

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/ladder-roof-transition