



Construction Risk Advisor

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Protect Your Employees With Ladder Alternative Programs

Although ladders can assist your employees in completing tasks from height, they also carry their own set of risks. In fact, recent research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the amount of ladder-related injuries has increased by 50% over the past decade. What's worse, the construction sector holds the highest rate of ladder-related injuries across industry lines—with falls from ladders reigning as one of the top causes of employee fatalities.

With this data in mind, it's crucial for construction employers like you to take steps to reduce ladder-related risks at the job site. Specifically, a ladder alternative program is an effective solution to help mitigate these concerns. Review the following guidance for more information on ladder alternative programs and best practices for implementing such a program within your workforce.

What Are Ladder Alternative Programs?

Ladder alternative programs are workplace safety initiatives that encourage employees to limit the need for ladder usage and utilize alternative equipment when working from height (if possible).

Provided by:

Acumen Solutions Group



Examples of alternative equipment to use instead of ladders include the following:

- Scissor lifts
- Mobile scaffolds
- Pulleys (for lifting materials)

Ladder Alternative Program Best Practices

When implementing these programs, ladders should be used as a last resort and only when it is safe to do so. In order to properly determine whether a ladder is necessary or the best form of equipment to use in an elevated work area, make sure employees and supervisors review these key questions:

- Will the employee be required to manually handle or lift heavy items while on the ladder?
- Does the height of the work area or length of time required to complete the task allow for a ladder to be used safely?
- Does the task require the employee to move frequently (e.g., operate other tools or equipment) or hold awkward body positioning on the ladder?
- Does the task require the employee to move their lower body outside of the ladder rails at any point?

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes,” a ladder alternative should be considered. In the event that a ladder remains the best and safest form of equipment for the task at hand, be sure that employees follow all necessary ladder safety precautions (e.g., inspecting the ladder before use, setting it up according to the manufacturer's instructions and wearing personal protective equipment). Regardless of what form of equipment is used, ensure that your employees receive routine training on elevated work safety.

For additional risk management guidance, contact us today.