

The Safety & Health Advisor

Winter 2004



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OSHA Reminds Employers to Post Injury/Illness Summaries on February 1

Beginning February 1, employers must post a summary of the total number of job-related injuries and illnesses that occurred last year. Employers are required to post only the Summary (OSHA Form 300A)-not the OSHA 300 Log -from Feb.1 to Apr. 30, 2004.

The summary must list the total number of job-related injuries and illnesses that occurred in 2003 and were logged on the OSHA 300 form. Employment information about annual average number of employees and total hours worked during the calendar year is also required to assist in calculating incidence rates. Companies with no recordable injuries or illnesses in 2003 must post the form with zeros on the total line.

All establishment summaries must be certified by a company executive. The form is to be displayed in a common area wherever notices to employees are usually posted. Employers with ten (10) or fewer employees and employers in certain industry groups are normally exempt from federal OSHA injury and illness recordkeeping and posting requirements. A complete list of exempt industries in the retail, services, finance and real estate sectors is posted on OSHA's website.

Copies of the OSHA Forms 300, 300A and 301 are available on the OSHA Recordkeeping Webpage (<http://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/index.html>) in either Adobe PDF or Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet format.

NEW OSHA FORMS FOR RECORDING WORK-RELATED INJURIES AND ILLNESSES

The revised OSHA Form 300, Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses is now available on OSHA's website at <http://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/new-osha300form1-1-04.pdf>. The forms, which are required for employers to use in recording injuries and illnesses, have changed in several important ways for 2004.

Foremost among the changes is the addition of an occupational hearing loss column to OSHA's Form 300, Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses. Other changes include:

- "days away from work" column now comes before the days "on job transfer or restriction"
- more clear formulas for calculating incidence rates
- new recording criteria for occupational hearing loss in the "Overview" section;
- more prominent column heading "Classify the Case" to make it clear that employers should mark only one selection among the four columns offered.

Employers must begin to use the new OSHA Form 300 on January 1, 2004. The new form has the date of revision (rev. 1/2004) located on the form next to the form number. Hard copies of the new OSHA 300 form can be obtained using OSHA's on-line order form or by calling 1-800-321-OSHA.

LADDER SAFETY

Employees use ladders in various types of industries. The safe use of ladders can make a task easier. Using the wrong type of ladder or setting up a ladder incorrectly can cause a serious injury. Falls are the most common type of injury resulting from the improper use of a ladder.

Ladder use can be found in many different types of businesses such as warehouses, storage rooms, construction and home maintenance. Ladders can include straight ladders, fixed ladders, extension ladders, stepladders, and others. This article will focus on straight ladders and stepladders.

Ladder Selection

There are many different types of ladders available for use. The ladders can be made of wood, metal or fiberglass. Choose a ladder that has a label indicating it complies with the specifications of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and that it listed with Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL).

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Determine if the ladder is the correct one for the task. Make sure the ladder is strong enough to support the person and the materials used. Ladders must not be loaded beyond the maximum intended load for which they were built or beyond the manufacturer's rated capacity.

Ladders are rated for capacity: Type IA- Extra heavy duty industrial, maximum load capacity not more than 300 pounds (user plus materials), Type I – Heavy duty industrial with load capacity not more than 250 pounds, Type II- Medium duty commercial with a load capacity of not more than 225 pounds and Type III- Light duty household with a load capacity of not more than 200 pounds.

Choose a wood or fiberglass ladder if working near electricity. Mark metal ladders with signs or decals reading: "Warning- Do Not Use Near Electrical Equipment". Metal ladders can conduct electricity.

All metal ladders should have slip-resistant rubber or plastic feet. Metal stepladders should have slip resistant steps. Some wood ladders also have these safety features. The ladders must have a slip resistant base if there is a chance of working on a slippery surface.

Inspect the condition of the ladder upon receipt. Check that the new ladders conform to the purchase order specifications and applicable codes.

Ladder Maintenance

Inspect ladders monthly and document the inspections. If the ladder is in poor condition, it must be tagged "Do Not Use" and taken out of service. Check the wood ladder for splinters, rot, loose joints and bolts and hardware in poor condition. Wood ladders should not be painted. Paint can conceal defects in the wood. Aluminum or steel ladders must be inspected for rough burrs and sharp edges, loose joints or bolts, hardware in poor condition and poor welds and cracks.

Ladders should be kept free of oil, grease and other slipping hazards.

Wood ladders are prone to drying and splitting with age. Wood ladders need a protective finish to preserve the wood, such as varnish. The varnish finish is good as long as it remains intact. When the varnish becomes damaged, the wood is open to the elements and can start to decay.

Ladder Setup

The following are suggested safety measures for ladder setup:

- If ladders must be placed in areas such as passageways, doorways, or driveways, or where they can be struck by workplace activities, traffic must be redirected to prevent accidental movement. A barricade can be used to keep traffic and activities away from the ladder. Lock or block any doors that may swing towards the ladder.
- Do not set up ladders near operational piping (acid, chemical, sprinkler systems, etc.).
- The areas around the top and bottom of the ladder should be kept clear.
- Ladders should be used on stable and level surfaces unless secured to prevent accidental movement. If outdoors, use a large board to keep the ladder from sinking into soft ground. When you use a ladder to reach a roof or platform, make sure the ladder extends at least three feet beyond the roof edge or support point.
- When setting up a ladder, keep in mind the one to four ratio. To accomplish this, set up the ladder so its base is one foot away from what it leans against for every four feet in height to the point where the ladder rests. This will produce an approximate 75-degree angle.

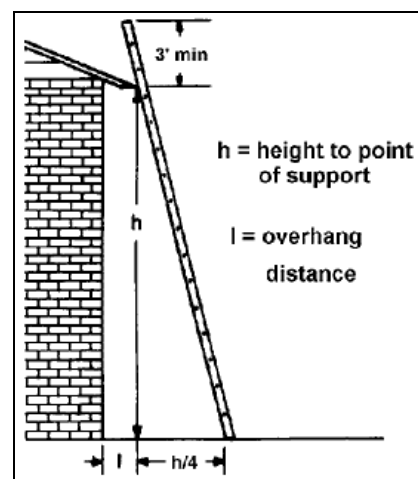


Figure 2. The base of a straight ladder should be one foot out of every four of height to the point of support

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- Do not place a ladder against a windowpane or sash. Never lean a ladder against unsecured backing such as boxes or barrels.
- When on the ladder, employees should not have to stretch more than an arm's length. If so, then the ladder must be moved.
- To keep a ladder from shifting, tie it as close to the support point as possible.
- When using a stepladder, make sure it is fully open and the spreader is locked. Never use a ladder outside on very windy days. When using a ladder to access high places, securely lash or fasten the ladder, top and bottom, to prevent it from slipping.
- Do not splice or lash short ladders together. They are designed for use in their original lengths.

Carrying the ladder

Ladders should be carried horizontally, not vertically. Use one hand to grasp the rail of the ladder midpoint. Carry the ladder with the top of the ladder in front of you. If the ladder is too heavy or too long, get help. If a ladder must be moved after it is in position, take it down and set it up correctly.

Climbing the ladder

Make sure that shoes are not greasy, muddy or slippery. Always face the ladder when ascending and descending and use both hands. Carry small tools in the tool belt to keep hands free. Do not attempt to carry up materials and tools. If materials or tools are needed, raise or lower them with a rope to the desired level.

When on a ladder, maintain balance by keeping the body between the side rails. Never reach or lean too far to one side. Keep a three-point grip on the ladder at all times (two hands and one foot or one hand and two feet).

On a straight ladder, do not climb higher than the third rung from the top. On a stepladder, do not climb higher than two rungs from the top. Do not overload the ladder. Remember, one person on a ladder at a time.

Some employees have a strong fear of heights. *Never force an employee to climb a ladder.*

Ladder Storage

Ladders should be stored where they will not fall or cause a tripping hazard. They can be rested on support racks about six feet apart. Store ladders where they will not be exposed to the weather and where there is good ventilation. Do not store near radiators, heaters, stoves, steam pipes or in other areas where there is excessive heat or dampness.

Training

All employees who will use ladders should be trained and authorized in ladder safety. As with all training, document the training. Even with the most expensive ladders, there can be accidents, if the employees are not trained in the care and use of a ladder.

References: The National Safety Council, OSHA 1910.25 and 1910.27, National Agricultural Safety Database, University of Missouri- Columbia, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Ohio State University Extension.

OSHA Offers Tips To Protect Workers In Cold Environments

OSHA is reminding employers and workers to take necessary precautions, such as those listed on OSHA's Cold Stress Card, to prevent and treat cold-related health problems. Workers in construction, delivery service operations, and incidental snow removal are among those who need to take extra precautions.

OSHA's Cold Stress Card provides a reference guide and recommendations to combat and prevent many illnesses and injuries. Available in English and Spanish, this laminated fold-up card is free to employers, workers and the public. For free copies of OSHA's Cold Stress Card in English or Spanish, go to OSHA's website, www.osha.gov, or call 1(800) 321-OSHA.

OSHA's Tips include:

- How to protect workers.
- Recognize the environmental and workplace conditions that may be dangerous.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of cold-induced illnesses and injuries and what to do to help workers.
- Train workers about cold-induced illnesses and injuries.

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- Encourage workers to wear proper clothing for cold, wet and windy conditions, including layers that can be adjusted to changing conditions.
- Be sure workers in extreme conditions take a frequent short break in warm dry shelters to allow their bodies to warm up.
- Try to schedule work for the warmest part of the day.
- Avoid exhaustion or fatigue because energy is needed to keep muscles warm.
- Use the buddy system - work in pairs so that one worker can recognize danger signs.
- Drink warm, sweet beverages (sugar water, sports-type drinks) and avoid drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, sodas or hot chocolate) or alcohol.
- Eat warm, high-calorie foods such as hot pasta dishes.

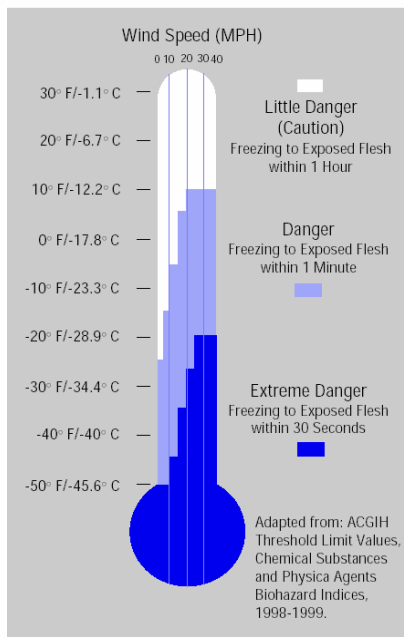
Remember, workers face increased risks when they take certain medications, are in poor physical condition or suffer from illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension or cardiovascular disease.

THE COLD STRESS EQUATION

**LOW TEMPERATURE + WIND SPEED + WETNESS
= INJURIES & ILLNESS**

When the body is unable to warm itself, serious cold-related illnesses and injuries may occur, and permanent tissue damage and death may result.

Hypothermia can occur when *land temperatures* are **above** freezing or *water temperatures* are below 98.6°F/ 37°C. Cold-related illnesses can slowly overcome a person who has been chilled by low temperatures, brisk winds, or wet clothing.



What Should Be Done In A Medical Emergency:

- Move the person to a warm dry area. Don't leave the person alone.
- Remove any wet or tight clothing that may cut off blood flow to the affected area.
- DO NOT rub the affected area, because rubbing causes damage to the skin and tissue.
- Gently place the affected area in a warm (105°F) water bath and monitor the water temperature to slowly warm the tissue. Don't pour warm water directly on the affected area because it will warm the tissue too fast causing tissue damage. Warming takes about 25-40 minutes.
- After the affected area has been warmed, it may become puffy and blister. The affected area may have a burning feeling or numbness. When normal feeling, movement, and skin color have returned, the affected area should be dried and wrapped to keep it warm. NOTE: If there is a chance the affected area may get cold again, do not warm the skin. If the skin is warmed and then becomes cold again, it will cause severe tissue damage.
- Seek medical attention as soon as possible.

If you're looking for additional assistance in setting up your ergonomics or safety and health program, please contact Neal Freedman, John Cotnam, Christine Efstathiou, or Mark Hickox from Atlantic Charter's Safety and Health Department at (617) 488-6500.