

Premises and Building Safety, Construction and Demolition

It is important to ensure that buildings are constructed in compliance with the regulations and applicable standards. The Occupational Safety General Regulations have specific requirements for stairways, ramps, catwalks, bracing and supports and demolition.

Where any major construction or demolition is required, Farm Safety Nova Scotia strongly encourages farmers to hire a competent individual or company to ensure the project is completed in compliance with regulations and applicable standards.

Walking Surfaces

It is important that all walking surfaces, including stairways, are designed and maintained to prevent hazards. In places where walking surfaces become slippery on the farm, it is the employer's responsibility to use devices such as matting or grating to prevent slipping.

When walking surfaces become slippery as a result of weather or climatic conditions, it is important to keep the surface free from falling and/or slipping hazards. This may require the use of salt, sand or ashes to eliminate the hazards.

Where it is not possible to use devices to prevent slipping, all people working in that area must wear non-slip footwear.

Access and Exit

It is important to have a safe means of entry and exit from all work areas, and that all those on the farm are informed of how to exit safely in the event of an emergency.

Where there is a hazard of falling material at the point of entry and exit, overhead protection must be provided.

Catwalks

Any walkway that is 1.8 m (5' 10") above ground or floor level is considered a catwalk and must be designed by an engineer. It must meet the following requirements:

- Have a minimum clearance width of 450 mm (18")
- Be equipped with a guardrail that has:
 - Secured posts spaced at intervals no greater than 2.4 m (7' 10")
 - A top railing between 0.90 and 1.06 m from the midpoint of the floor and securely fastened to the posts
 - A railing midway between the top railing and midpoint of the floor and fastened on the inner side of the posts

Underground Utility Lines

Utility lines refer to underground electrical, water, telephone, gas or other utility line or piping. Before any excavation or trenching begins, the employer must ensure the utility line is clearly located and marked. The owner of the utility line must be contacted.

The work must be performed by, or in accordance with the instructions of, a competent person employed or authorized by the utility owner.

cont'd on next page

Ladders

It is important to ensure that any **fixed ladder** is constructed to meet the appropriate ANSI standard. Look for the certification when purchasing.

Anyone using a ladder, **fixed or portable**, must:

- Face the ladder when climbing and descending.
- Maintain 3-point contact when more than 1 m above a safe surface.
- When standing on the ladder, stand in the centre.
- Not stand on the material shelf or top step of a step ladder.
- Not work from the top three rungs of any ladder, other than a step ladder.

Any ladder with loose, broken or missing rungs, split side rails or other hazardous defects must be removed from service.

PORTABLE LADDERS

Portable ladders used in the workplace must be:

- Able to withstand 4 times the maximum load likely to be imposed.
- Clean and free of grease, oil or other slippery substances.
- Maintained in safe condition.
- Inspected to ensure all components are in adequate condition and the ladder is safe to use:
 - Before each use
 - Annually
- Not used when the above inspection identifies inadequate condition.

*Grade 3 portable ladders are **not** to be used at a workplace.*

Where an employer uses a portable wooden ladder that is not commercially manufactured, it must be designed and built according to the applicable regulations.

When using a commercially-built, portable ladder, ensure the following:

- With an extension ladder, maintain adequate overlap between the sections, AND ensure locks are engaged before the ladder is climbed.
- That the ladder is non-conductive, if contact with live electrical conductors is a risk.

*A portable ladder, designed specifically for the purpose of **harvesting fruit from trees**, and is used only for that purpose, must be erected, constructed, maintained and used adequately for that purpose.*

When using a portable ladder, ensure:

- It is placed on firm footing.
- It is secured against movement.
- That if used as a means of access or exit:
 - It has side rails extending at least 1 m above any platform or landing.
 - It has a clearance of at least 150 mm (6") between it and the supporting structure, except where supported against the structure.
- As a step ladder, legs should be held in a secure position by metal braces or equivalent rigid support.

When using a portable ladder, ensure it is **not**:

- Unsafely spliced with another ladder.
- Placed in front of or against a door that opens toward the ladder, unless the door is blocked.
- Used as a scaffold, ramp or a support for such.
- Placed on a box, barrel, scaffold or unstable base.
- Lashed to another ladder to increase its length.
- On an elevator shaft or hoistway when area is used for hoisting.

Where a portable ladder is used as a means of entry or exit for more than six (6) people, at a height greater than 6 m, two (2) separate ladders must be provided.

DISCLAIMER:

This fact sheet is a general overview for information purposes only. Farmers must reference legislation to ensure compliance.