

ELECTRONIC CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS

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Title 29: Labor
[PART 1910—OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS](#)
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§1910.26 Portable metal ladders.

(a) *Requirements*—(1) *General*. Specific design and construction requirements are not part of this section because of the wide variety of metals and design possibilities. However, the design shall be such as to produce a ladder without structural defects or accident hazards such as sharp edges, burrs, etc. The metal selected shall be of sufficient strength to meet the test requirements, and shall be protected against corrosion unless inherently corrosion-resistant.

(i)-(ii) [Reserved]

(iii) The spacing of rungs or steps shall be on 12-inch centers.

(iv) [Reserved]

(v) Rungs and steps shall be corrugated, knurled, dimpled, coated with skid-resistant material, or otherwise treated to minimize the possibility of slipping.

(2) *General specifications—straight and extension ladders*. (i) The minimum width between side rails of a straight ladder or any section of an extension ladder shall be 12 inches.

(ii) The length of single ladders or individual sections of ladders shall not exceed 30 feet. Two-section ladders shall not exceed 48 feet in length and over two-section ladders shall not exceed 60 feet in length.

(iii) Based on the nominal length of the ladder, each section of a multisection ladder shall overlap the adjacent section by at least the number of feet stated in the following:

Normal length of ladder (feet)	Overlap (feet)
Up to and including 36	3
Over 36, up to and including 48	4
Over 48, up to 60	5

(iv) Extension ladders shall be equipped with positive stops which will insure the overlap specified in the table above.

(3) *General specifications—step ladders.*

(i)-(ii) [Reserved]

(iii) The length of a stepladder is measured by the length of the front rail. To be classified as a standard length ladder, the measured length shall be within plus or minus one-half inch of the specified length. Stepladders shall not exceed 20 feet in length.

(iv)-(vi) [Reserved]

(vii) The bottoms of the four rails are to be supplied with insulating nonslip material for the safety of the user.

(viii) A metal spreader or locking device of sufficient size and strength to securely hold the front and back sections in the open position shall be a component of each stepladder. The spreader shall have all sharp points or edges covered or removed to protect the user.

(4) *General specifications—trestles and extension trestle ladders.* (i) Trestle ladders or extension sections or base sections of extension trestle ladders shall be not more than 20 feet in length.

(ii) [Reserved]

(5) *General specifications—platform ladders.* (i) The length of a platform ladder shall not exceed 20 feet. The length of a platform ladder shall be measured along the front rail from the floor to the platform.

(ii) [Reserved]

(b) [Reserved]

(c) *Care and maintenance of ladders—(1) General.* To get maximum serviceability, safety, and to eliminate unnecessary damage of equipment, good safe practices in the use and care of ladder equipment must be employed by the users.

The following rules and regulations are essential to the life of the equipment and the safety of the user.

(2) *Care of ladders.*

(i)-(iii) [Reserved]

(iv) Ladders must be maintained in good usable condition at all times.

(v) [Reserved]

(vi) If a ladder is involved in any of the following, immediate inspection is necessary:

(a) If ladders tip over, inspect ladder for side rails dents or bends, or excessively dented rungs; check all rung-to- side-rail connections; check hardware connections; check rivets for shear.

(b)-(c) [Reserved]

(d) If ladders are exposed to oil and grease, equipment should be cleaned of oil, grease, or slippery materials. This can easily be done with a solvent or steam cleaning.

(vii) Ladders having defects are to be marked and taken out of service until repaired by either maintenance department or the manufacturer.

(3) *Use of ladders.* (i). A simple rule for setting up a ladder at the proper angle is to place the base a distance from the vertical wall equal to one-fourth the working length of the ladder.

(ii) Portable ladders are designed as a one-man working ladder based on a 200-pound load.

(iii) The ladder base section must be placed with a secure footing.

(iv) The top of the ladder must be placed with the two rails supported, unless equipped with a single support attachment.

(v) When ascending or descending, the climber must face the ladder.

(vi) Ladders must not be tied or fastened together to provide longer sections. They must be equipped with the hardware fittings necessary if the manufacturer endorses extended uses.

(vii) Ladders should not be used as a brace, skid, guy or gin pole, gangway, or for other uses than that for which they were intended, unless specifically recommended for use by the manufacturer.

(viii) See §1910.333(c) for work practices to be used when work is performed on or near electric circuits.

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