



## KEEP SAFE

A Monthly Publication for Texas Electric Cooperatives

May 2011

# Take ladder safety one rung at a time

**G**ravity never forgets. As soon as you set foot on the ladder's first rung and pull your body off the ground, gravity works to bring you back to earth. Therefore, it's no surprise that ladder safety begins from the ground up.

## Start with a good foundation

Proper ladder setup will help prevent slips and falls. Place the base on a firm, solid surface. Avoid slippery, wet or soft surfaces. If you must put the ladder on a soft surface, place a board under the ladder's feet to provide firm footing. Make sure the top of the ladder has firm support as well. Never lean a ladder against a window pane or other unstable surface.

If you're using a straight or extension ladder, the angle of the ladder is the next critical safety factor. A straight or extension ladder should be placed 1 foot away from the surface it rests against for every 4 feet of ladder height. For example, if the ladder is 4 feet high, the bottom of the ladder should be 1 foot away from the support surface. If you use a ladder to access a roof or platform, make sure the ladder extends at least 3 feet over the roof or platform edge. Be sure to securely fasten straight and extension ladders to the upper support. If you have angled the ladder properly and still have doubts about its stability, have someone hold the ladder before climbing up.

If you're using a step ladder, be sure to open it completely before you climb. If you have to use a step ladder near a doorway, lock or barricade the door and post signs so no one will open it and knock you off the ladder.

## Climb with care

When you climb, always face the ladder and grip the rungs of the ladder to climb, not the side rails. Never get on or off a

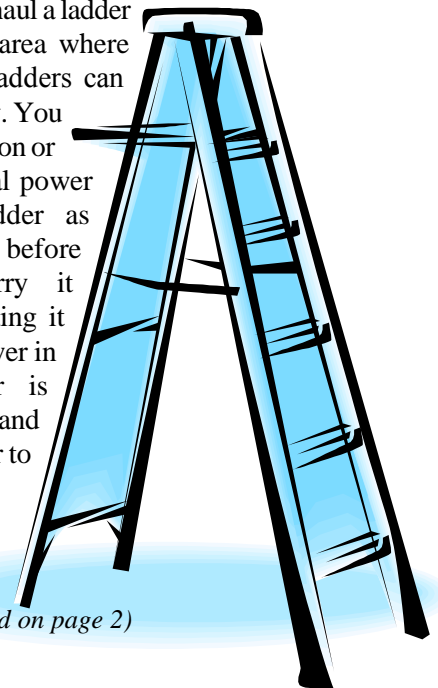
ladder from the side unless it has been secured to prevent movement.

Never climb with equipment in your hands. Use your pockets, equipment belt, or a tool pouch and raise heavy objects with a handline. If you forget something, always climb down the ladder to retrieve it yourself; don't have someone toss it up to you. And never ask someone to climb up your ladder to give you supplies. It is dangerous to exceed the weight limits that a specific ladder can handle.

When you descend a ladder, practice the same safety rules. Face the ladder, keep your body square and hold on to the rungs. Lastly, step off at the bottom rung of the ladder. Never jump off of a ladder.

## Think before you carry

Before you start to haul a ladder around, evaluate the area where you'll be working. Ladders can be heavy and unwieldy. You can strike another person or object, or hit electrical power lines. Make the ladder as compact as possible before transporting it. Carry it horizontally while tilting it higher in front and lower in back. If the ladder is particularly long and heavy, get a co-worker to help you carry it.



*(Ladder safety continued on page 2)*

(Ladder safety continued from page 1)

## Follow the rules

Ladder safety may seem simple, but injuries occur every year. Below are some ladder safety do's and don'ts:

- Use the right ladder for the job.
- Inspect the ladder before and after a job.
- Read all warning labels carefully and follow directions before you climb.
- Clean the ladder after each use to prevent dirt buildup.
- Wear clean, dry, slip-resistant shoes and use ladders with slip-resistant feet.
- Don't stand any higher than the third rung from the top of the ladder.
- Don't lean too far or overreach. Reposition the ladder closer to the work instead.
- Don't use a ladder as a bridge or scaffold.
- Don't put a ladder on a box, barrel or other object to gain additional heights.
- Don't use a damaged or unsafe ladder.

Experts also warn about ladder use in bad weather. Descend immediately if high winds, rain or other inclement weather begins. Wind force can blow you off the ladder. Rain can make the rungs and the ground slippery. Bitter cold can make metal ladders more brittle and can cause other structural damage. If you encounter bad weather while on a ladder, do not speed up to finish the job and risk injury. Wait to finish the job until conditions are once again safe.

Remember, don't let gravity get you down. Practice ladder safety rules every time you climb to make your work easier, faster and safer.

— 5 minute safety talk  
National Safety Council



**Loss Control  
Transformer School  
in Gonzales**

## May – paint it safe

*Here's a project that has the added benefit of beautifying your home. Use the following precautions to ensure that you and your family stay healthy and safe enough to admire that great new paint color you've just applied.*

- If the label on the paint can indicates that the paint is flammable, open windows and doors to create ventilation.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, butyl rubber gloves, goggles and a paint respirator. If you feel dizzy or nauseated while painting, get fresh air. If paint gets on your skin, wash it off immediately with soap and water.
- Should paint get in your eyes, flush with cold water for 15 minutes and seek medical treatment.
- When painting hard-to-reach places, place a sturdy ladder on level ground and open fully so that all locks are in place.
- Carefully test your side reach: If your belt buckle passes outside the ladders side rail, you are reaching too far, which can cause a fall.
- On a stepladder, avoid standing above the third rung from the top.
- On an extension ladder, avoid standing above the fourth rung from the top.
- Tightly seal paint containers before storing. Do not store near heat sources, and keep all paint products out of the reach of children.
- To dispose of water-based paint, fill a paper bag or box with kitty litter, sand or sawdust, and pour the paint over the material. Allow to dry, then place in the regular trash.
- Oil-based paints and solvents are considered hazardous waste and should never be placed in the trash. Check your community guidelines for proper hazardous-waste collections.

— Home Safety Council  
For more home safety tips, visit [MySafeHome.org](http://MySafeHome.org)


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# Texas Electric Cooperatives

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## 2011 TEC LOSS CONTROL SCHOOLS (31 Schools)

Regulator Recloser Capacitors (Merkel)	January 11-14
Metering (Gonzales)	January 18-21
2 Day Transformer (San Augustine)	January 26-27
Transformer (Livingston)	February 8-11
Metering (Lubbock)	February 15-18
Regulator Recloser Capacitors (San Augustine)	February 22-25
Advanced Pole Climbing (Gonzales)	February 22-25
Regulator Recloser Capacitors (Tahoka)	March 1-4
Troubleshooting (Greenville)	March 8-11
Transformer (Gonzales)	March 29-April 1
Metering (Merkel)	April 5-8
Basic Pole Climbing (San Augustine)	April 5-8
Regulator Recloser Capacitors (McGregor)	April 12-15
Hotline 1-4 (Henderson)	April 25-29
Basic Pole Climbing (Gonzales)	April 26-29
Underground (Quitman)	May 2-6
Regulator Recloser Capacitors (Gonzales)	May 10-13
Transformer (Tahoka)	May 17-20
Hotline 1-4 (Merkel)	May 23-27
Metering (McGregor)	June 7-10
Basic Pole Climbing (Tahoka)	June 7-10
Underground (Gonzales)	June 13-17
Metering (Livingston)	June 21-24
Troubleshooting (Livingston)	July 26-29
Regulator Recloser Capacitors (Greenville)	August 16-19
Underground (Levelland)	August 22-26
Hotline 1-4 (Gonzales)	August 29-Sept 2
Underground (McGregor)	September 12-16
Hotline 1-4 (Levelland)	September 26-30
Underground (Merkel)	October 3-7
Hotline 1-4 (Livingston)	October 24-28