



Orchard-Ladder Safety

West Virginia University
Environmental Health and Safety



Orchard-Ladder Precautions

- Inspect orchard ladders for defects, including missing, loose, or sheared rivets, broken steps, and bent rails or tripod legs.
- When working on orchard ladders wear appropriate personal protective equipment, including a hat, eye protection, long sleeve shirt, long pants, and gloves.
- Never use an aluminum orchard ladder near energized electrical equipment such as power lines.
- Only one person at a time shall climb or stand on an orchard ladder.
- Never sit on an orchard ladder and do not stand on the top two steps of an orchard ladder.
- When positioning a straight orchard ladder, the top of the ladder should be placed firmly against the tree trunk at an angle so that the ladder steps are parallel to the ground.
- Straight orchard ladders are not stable across the ground slope. Position straight orchard ladders so they are facing into an uphill or downhill slope.
- When positioning a tripod orchard ladder, the steps should be level and the tripod leg should extend straight from the center line of the ladder. Where possible, the tripod leg should be placed on level ground. On sloping land, position the tripod leg uphill. When positioning the ladder across the land slope, locate the tripod leg slightly downhill.
- Avoid reaching too high above your head or too far to the side while standing on an orchard ladder. Climb to a higher step or move the ladder closer to the tree fruit if you are beginning to reach above your head or lean out past the ladder rails.
- Position the straps of the fruit sack or bucket to evenly distribute the picked crop weight and maintain a stable posture on the orchard ladder.
- Carefully remove fruit from the tree to prevent being poked by branches or hit by rebounding branches.
- Consume adequate water and take appropriate rest breaks to prevent heat stress during hot days.

