



Safety Bulletin EM 385-1-1

Mobile District Safety and Occupational Health Office

Bulletin 45-09

LADDERS – LENGTH, WIDTH, SPACING

The 15 September 2008 Safety Manual (yellow book) is now in effect for most new contracts and government operations. Please note the changes for ladders as stated below.

24.B.01 The construction, installation, and use of ladders shall conform to ANSI A14.1, ANSI A14.2, ANSI A14.3, and ANSI A14.4, as applicable.

24.B.02 Length of ladders.

- a. All portable ladders shall be of sufficient length and shall be placed so that workers will not stretch or assume a hazardous position.
- b. Portable ladders, used as temporary access, shall extend at least 3 ft (0.9 m) above the upper landing surface.
 - (1) When a 3 ft (0.9-m) extension is not possible, a grasping device (such as a grab rail) shall be provided to assist workers in mounting and dismounting the ladder.
 - (2) In no case shall the length of the ladder be such that ladder deflection under a load would, by itself, cause the ladder to slip from its support.
- c. The length of portable stepladders shall not exceed 20 ft (6 m).
- d. When splicing of side rails is required to obtain the required length, the resulting side rail must be at least equal in strength to a one-piece side rail made of the same material.

24.B.03 Width of ladders.

- a. The minimum clear distance between the sides of individual rung/ step ladders shall be 16 in (40.6 cm).
- b. The minimum clear distance between side rails for all portable ladders shall be 12 in (30.4 cm).

24.B.04 Spacing of rungs, cleats, and steps on ladders.

- a. On portable ladders, spacing of rungs shall be 8 in (20.3 cm) - 14 in (35.5 cm) on center and uniform.
- b. On step stools, spacing shall be not less than 8 in (20.3 cm) or more than 12 in (30.4 cm) apart, as measured from their centerlines.
- c. On extension trestle ladders, spacing on the base section shall be not less than 8 in (20.3 cm) or more than 18 in (45.7 cm) apart, as measured from their centerlines. On the extension section, spacing shall not be less than 6 in (15.2 cm) or more than 12 in (30.4 cm) apart, as measured from their centerlines.

