



OSHA 29-CFR-1910.27 has a laundry list of requirements for FIXED LADDERS. Knowing where and how they are maintained in your first due, can help gain access to various areas. Having a basic understanding of fixed ladders can help you with perform a ladder size up and determine if this is an option.



Key points:

- Rungs must be designed so the foot cannot slide off.
- Metal ladders shall be painted or treated to resist corrosion and rust.
- 30 inches of clearance must be available on the climbing side for a 90-degree ladder.
- A ladder cage is required for all ladders longer than 20 feet and must extend 42 inches above top landing.
- All ladders must be maintained in safe condition, inspected regularly - based on use and exposure.

Fixed ladders also include pit ladders that are formed by using metal rungs embedded into concrete. These can be a valve pit or leading down into a waterway. Most commonly, the rungs are made from rebar. Keep in mind that pits stay moist and corrosion will be more prevalent.

Regarding safety while using fixed ladders, a different climbing pitch is used in comparison to portable ladders. Keeping two hands free to climb is important on a 90 degree ladder, even more so when it is taller than 20 feet and your climbing in a cage. Ropes to hoist tools is a must! Using the fixed ladder can help us quickly make access but consider having the next in engine or truck throw a ladder. This not only provides egress if we decide not to come down the fixed ladder due to possible failure, but also as a second means of egress.

Many reasons exist that may cause us to use a buildings fixed ladder. Roof access, confined space rescue and internal elevations. Being familiar with fixed ladders can save time on scene, however how well as the owner maintained them. Get out and look for fixed ladders in your first due!

