



September 15 — Two Hazards Are Still Two Hazards

Employee was on an extension ladder without a harness using a grinder without a face shield!!	I informed A-Lert employees that this was a perfect example of what not to do as an A-Lert and that we take tie off absolutely serious.
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An employee was working from an extension ladder without a harness while using a grinder without a face shield.

This situation presented two separate safety concerns at the same time. The employee was working at height without the required fall protection, while also operating a grinder without the appropriate face protection.

The observation is a good reminder that one unsafe condition can quickly become several. The employee was working at height without fall protection while also using a grinder without appropriate face protection. Even though the discussion that followed focused on the importance of tie-off, the entire task demonstrates why we need to look at every hazard present—not just the one that catches our attention first.

Using a grinder requires us to think about the hazards created by the tool, while working from an elevated position requires us to think about fall protection. One does not eliminate the other.

Before starting a task, take a moment to look at the complete work situation. Where are you working? What tool are you using? What could happen if you lose your balance? What could happen if the tool kicks back or throws debris?

Hazards

- Fall from an extension ladder
- Eye and face injuries from grinding
- Flying sparks and particles
- Working at heights without proper fall protection
- Loss of balance while operating a grinder

Words of Wisdom

A safe tool doesn't make an unsafe work position safe. Look at the entire task and make sure you're protected from every hazard, not just the one in your hands.

Pause and Think

- Are you properly protected from falls before starting work at height?
- Do you have the proper eye and face protection for the tool you're using?
- Have you identified all of the hazards associated with the task?
- Are you using the safest method available to perform the work?
- Would you stop if you noticed another hazard after the job had already started?

Closing Thought

Safe work means looking at the whole task—not just the tool in your hands. Identify every hazard, protect yourself from each one, and don't accept shortcuts.