



March 16 — Reaching Past Stability

As I was walking by I seen an customer's operator working off ladder, but he was on his tippy toes trying

Told him you need a taller ladder.

An operator was observed working from a ladder while standing on his tiptoes to gain extra reach. The ladder itself was in place. Nothing appeared broken. But the worker had moved beyond the ladder's designed working range.

If you have to stretch, you're too far.
Climb down. Move it. Climb back up.
Extra reach increases extra risk.

Ladders are engineered with a defined center of gravity. When a person stands on tiptoes, leans, or overreaches, that center shifts. Stability decreases instantly. It doesn't take much a slight movement, tool pressure, or body adjustment for balance to be lost.

Most ladder falls don't happen because the ladder collapses. They happen because someone reaches just a little too far.

This wasn't about not knowing how to use a ladder. It was about trying to gain a few extra inches instead of climbing down and repositioning.

And those few inches are often where falls begin.

Hazards

- Loss of balance
- Ladder tip-over
- Fall from height
- Wrist or ankle fracture
- Head injury
- Secondary impact injuries

Stats

- Falls from ladders remain a leading cause of workplace injuries.
- Overreaching is a common contributing factor in ladder-related falls.
- Many ladder injuries occur at relatively low heights.
- Loss of balance accounts for a significant percentage of fall incidents.

Humans at Work

It never starts with a big move. It's just a little more reach. Just a few more inches. You're already up there and you don't want to climb down and move the ladder. You're almost done. That's momentum. That's how we talk ourselves into stretching instead of resetting.

But ladders are stable only when your body stays centered between the rails. The second you rise onto your toes or lean outside that frame, you've changed the balance. That's when falls happen. If you have to stretch, the ladder is in the wrong spot. Climb down. Move it. Climb back up. It takes a minute. A fall takes a lot longer to recover from.

Pause and Think

- Is there a safer alternative?
- Is your body centered between the rails?
- Are both feet flat and secure?
- Would moving the ladder reduce the reach?