



# SHARP START



May 21 — It'll Hold....Until It Doesn't

<p><b>There was an employee working up high on some stacks with an extension ladder next to him. He wanted to come down, but the ladder was not secured, and no one was holding it. I told his coworker that he needed to hold the ladder while he climbed down</b></p>	<p><b>His coworker took it well and held the ladder while the worker climbed down</b></p>
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The ladder was in place. It was set up. It looked usable. So the work continued. No tie-off. No one holding it. No stabilization. It feels steady at first.

You climb up. You climb down. Nothing moves. That builds confidence. But ladders don't fail slowly. They shift. They slide. They lose contact.

And when they do, it happens all at once. There's no catching yourself halfway down. No time to correct it mid-step. You go where the ladder goes. Nothing slipped this time.

But the setup allowed it to happen before the climb even started. The fix was simple.

Secure it. Have someone hold it. Make sure it's stable before using it.

Because ladders don't need a big mistake. They just need one moment without control.

## Hazards

- Ladder shift or slide
- Fall from elevation
- Loss of balance while climbing
- Improper ladder setup
- Line of fire exposure to gravity

## Stats

- Falls from ladders are a leading cause of workplace injuries
- Many incidents involve improperly secured ladders
- Short duration tasks account for a large portion of ladder-related injuries
- Proper setup significantly reduces fall risk

## Words of Wisdom

- If it's not secured, it's not safe
- "It feels stable" isn't protection
- Set it right before you climb

## Pause and Think

It's easy to trust a ladder that hasn't moved yet.

You've used it. It feels solid. You don't expect it to shift.

But that's not how failure works.

It doesn't give you a warning first.

And once it moves, you're already committed.

- Do I secure ladders before using them?
- Am I relying on how it feels instead of how it's set?
- Do I take shortcuts on setup for quick tasks?
- Would I stop before climbing in this situation?