

# Climbing and Reaching Safely

There's never enough space to store everything you'll need in an easy-to-reach place, so you may find yourself having to get something that's out of your reach. You may need to reach extra condiments on the top shelf of dry storage, a container of bleach in the cleaning closet or milk in the walk-in refrigerator.

Whatever it is, don't try to climb the shelves or use makeshift ladders to get what you want. It's sometimes tempting to climb on anything that's handy. Standing on top of a trash can, a box, a chair or a table to reach something, or making a short ladder taller by putting it on top of a box or blocks can be very dangerous.

Use the right equipment to help you reach what you want. Find out what you need—a small stepladder, an extension ladder, or even a special industrial device. If you're not sure what you need or don't think what you need is available, talk to your supervisor.



## Getting Ready

### 1) Choose the right equipment.

- ◆ Make sure you use a ladder or stepstool that's strong enough and long enough for the job.
- ◆ Check the ladder's duty rating and don't exceed its limits. Type I, an industrial ladder, holds 250 pounds. Type II holds 225 pounds. Type III, the household ladder, holds 200 pounds.
- ◆ Consider the weight of what you'll be carrying when selecting your equipment.

### 2) Inspect the equipment before using it.

- ◆ Check for loose or bent rungs or steps, cracked side rails or bent or missing parts.
- ◆ Make sure the spreaders can be locked in place when opened.
- ◆ Metal ladders should have plastic or rubber feet and step coverings.
- ◆ Check for oil and grease on the rungs or steps that could cause you to slip.
- ◆ Replace missing parts and tighten loose hardware.
- ◆ Make sure the steps are wide enough for you to spread your feet for balance.

### 3) Set it up carefully.

- ◆ Place the ladder or stepstool on a firm, level surface.
- ◆ In busy areas, use a barricade to prevent collisions.
- ◆ Lock nearby doors that could open toward you.

## Climbing With Caution

- ◆ Face the ladder when you climb up or down.
- ◆ Hold on to the side rails.
- ◆ Carry small amounts.
- ◆ Have someone hand heavier objects up to you.
- ◆ Use a rope to raise heavier equipment. (Never raise or lower equipment by its power cord.)
- ◆ Never overreach.
- ◆ Always keep your body centered.
- ◆ Allow only one person on a ladder or stepstool at a time.
- ◆ Wear shoes with nonskid soles.
- ◆ Make sure your hands and feet are dry and free of grease.
- ◆ Never step on the top two rungs of a ladder.
- ◆ Never use a ladder or stepstool for anything other than its intended purpose.
- ◆ Never substitute stools, chairs or boxes for ladders or stepstools.
- ◆ Avoid standing underneath a ladder; be aware of what can fall from above.