

## Platform Ladder Safety Tips for Warehouses and Distribution Centers

### What Is a Platform Ladder?

A [platform ladder](#), also known as a rolling ladder or a rolling staircase, is an essential piece of equipment in warehouses and distribution centers. From stockrooms to equipment maintenance, a platform ladder is the best solution for getting personnel within arms-reach of an elevated task. Typically constructed with lightweight, noncorrosive metals (such as steel and aluminum), rolling ladders can be safely maneuvered into position by one person.

### OSHA's Platform Ladder Requirements

All rolling ladders used in [general industry](#) settings must comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA's) regulations for [Walking-Working Surfaces and Personal Fall Protection Systems](#) (29 CFR part 1910, subpart D). Published in 2017, the aim of OSHA's revised Walking-Working Surfaces rule was to better protect workers in general industry by aligning regulation with advancements in best practices and technology. At the time of the revised rule's publication, OSHA estimated that the adoption of this regulation would prevent 29 fatalities and 5,842 lost workday injuries annually.

As a result of this regulation overhaul, rolling ladders are now subject to more strident design requirements that are intended to protect personnel from accidents and injuries. For example, the steps on a platform ladder must have a width of at least 16 inches; a rise of not more than 10 inches; and a depth of not less than 7-inches. Additionally, all rolling ladder steps must be uniformly spaced and slip resistant. However, OSHA's new design requirements do not stop there. Load capacities, locking mechanisms and handrail specifications (to name only a few additional ladder elements) are also governed by OSHA's revised rule. For a more exhaustive review of OSHA's rolling staircase design requirements, read our blogpost: [Stepping Up Ladder Safety in the Aviation Industry](#).

In addition to providing more comprehensive guidelines for the design of rolling ladders, OSHA's revised regulation also sought to provide employers with clearer guidance on rolling staircase training and inspection requirements.



Outlined below are **some** of the key takeaways that emerged from the revisions to OSHA's Walking-Working Surfaces rule:

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- If a rolling ladder is to be used, it must first be secured and stabilized. This is especially important in those instances where the ground is slippery, uneven or is likely to cause the ladder platform to move while in use.
- Boxes, barrels and/or other unstable bases should never be used to provide rolling ladders with additional height.
- Workers that will need to use a platform ladder for the execution of their job duties must be trained (and retrained as necessary) by qualified personnel.
- Rolling ladder training must be provided in a language and a vocabulary that the worker understands.

Given the repercussions that can occur from failing to use an OSHA compliant rolling ladder, facilities should make partnering with and purchasing from OSHA design experts a priority. At Wildeck, all of our platform ladder products (whether standard or custom ordered) are designed in compliance with OSHA and Cal-OSHA requirements, ensuring a safe climbing experience. Let Wildeck's engineering experts design an OSHA compliant ladder that meets your facility's specific needs.

### Platform Ladder Safety Tips

While purchasing and using OSHA compliant rolling ladders is a critical step in achieving greater levels of facility safety, it is only the first step in a ladder safety journey. Companies that use rolling ladders in their facility also need to develop and implement a rolling ladder safety training program. A ladder safety program, tailored to a facility's specific needs, allows companies to teach employees best practices and address specific application concerns and hazards. The following list of ten suggestions offers insight into some ladder safety best practices that should be included in a facility's training program:



1. Always ensure that the rolling ladder is properly set up and used in accordance with the safety instructions/warnings that can be found on the ladder's label.
2. Personnel using a platform ladder should always wear slip-resistant footwear (no sandals or flip-flops). Additionally, baggy/loose clothing should not be worn, and shirts should be tucked in.

3. Prior to use, the rolling staircase should be inspected. Walk around the ladder and look for signs of damage and/or worn parts. Make sure that the ladder is free of any slipping hazards (i.e. oil, grease, paint, water). Complete all necessary repairs prior to use.
4. Ensure that the rolling ladder is positioned on firm, dry, level ground. Make sure that all the ladder's feet have firm contact with the ground. The ladder should not exhibit any rocking motions. If it does, reposition the ladder so it is steady.
5. When ascending or descending rolling ladders, do so one step at a time. Additionally, do not try to add extra height by standing on top of buckets or boxes at the top of the ladder platform.
6. Only one person should ever be on a platform ladder at a time. If needed, a second person can be positioned alongside the ladder to provide assistance as needed.
7. Never attempt to move or reposition a rolling staircase while personnel and/or tools are on it. If a ladder needs to be moved or repositioned, clear the ladder of personnel and/or tools first and then make any necessary adjustments.
8. Do your best to avoid positioning rolling ladders in the pathways of pedestrian and vehicle traffic. If a ladder must be positioned in these pathways, use personnel, safety cones, etc. to guide traffic away from the ladder's location.
9. Always position a rolling ladder within arm's reach (or closer if possible) to the task at hand. Do not attempt to overreach. Personnel should keep the majority of their body weight centered on the ladder.
10. After using a platform ladder, be sure that it is stored in a secure, dry location for future use.

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Rolling ladders are warehouses and distribution centers best resource for accessing goods and tasks at elevated levels. When designed in compliance with OSHA's regulations, rolling ladders allow personnel to climb with peace of mind. Additionally, companies that develop and implement a rolling ladder safety program ensure that their personnel are able to use the equipment in a safe and efficient manner.

If you have any questions about purchasing an OSHA compliant platform ladder or need help developing a ladder safety program, contact Wildeck at [info@wildeck.com](mailto:info@wildeck.com) or (800) 325-6939. Our team of compliance and safety experts are here to help with all your ladder needs.