

For Your Safety: No Free Ladders

Question: How many aluminum ladders are being saved from the scrap pile and put back into service at scrap yards?

Answer: Too many.

If the ladder was tossed by the original owner there is probably a reason why. Broken rails, broken rungs or broken feet all create safety hazards for the user. Climbing a ladder that is in good condition can be hazardous, don't increase your chances for a fall by climbing one that can fail. Before you climb a ladder:

- Inspect that the feet, rungs and rails are in good condition.
- Make sure the ladder is long enough.
- Check that there is a good footing to place the ladder.
- Use a proper lean angle so the ladder won't kick out or tip backwards.
- When possible tie off the base for additional security.

If the ladder is damaged make sure to tag it out of service. If the ladder can not be repaired properly (and very few can), make sure it is destroyed so it can't be recycled. Buying new ladders that have all the parts in good condition may seem expensive but it is not even close to the cost of an injured worker or an OSHA fine. Increase the size of your aluminum pile by destroying your broken ladders today.

For Your Information: Safety and the Aging Work Force

Employers must do more to serve the aging workforce and strive to reduce fatality rates, says Jack Dobson, president of the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE).

"Businesses must act now to accommodate and provide a safer work environment for the aging worker, a valuable and experienced group, or their bottom line will be impacted negatively." He pointed to several easy and economical ways to achieve this:

- Improve illumination and add color contrast to the workplace.
- Eliminate heavy lifts, elevated work from ladders, and long reaches.
- Reduce static standing time.
- Reduce noise levels.
- Guard against falls by installing skid-resistant material for flooring and stair treads.
- Provide opportunities for practice and time to develop familiarity with tasks.

Such changes would not only help older workers, but would also benefit all employees, says Dobson.

This e-mail was produced by the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc. For more information, visit us on the Web at www.isri.org. For comments or suggestions about *For Your Safety*, e-mail johngilstrap@isri.org

