

Hazardous Effects of Weather on Portable Ladders

Wind, rain, and temperature all contribute to reducing a mountain into a pile of dirt. Weather can have detrimental effects on portable ladder use too. Here are a few things to keep in mind to help avoid weather-related problems affecting portable ladders.

Wet ladders are more slippery than dry ladders - Your foot is more likely to slip off a wet ladder rung, especially if the soles of your shoes are muddy. The base of your ladder can slip more easily on wet ground. And water combined with freezing temperatures can create ice on the ladder or on the surface where the ladder is sitting

Water also causes ladders to slowly deteriorate - Metal parts like spreaders, rivets, and other fasteners can slowly corrode when constantly exposed to moisture. Even though corrosion damage may take months or even years to occur, damaged parts lack the strength of the original parts and can eventually bend or break. Additionally, warnings and instructional stickers applied by ladder manufacturers will often tear or come off when exposed to prolonged moisture.

Ladders that are allowed to lie in water can become waterlogged - This primarily affects wooden ladders, but it can also cause what is normally considered a nonconductive ladder to actually conduct electricity, thereby increasing the risk of electrocution if used while working on or near energized electrical lines or equipment.

Wind gusts can make your ladder move or fall over - Depending on the speed of the wind, this might occur whether you are standing on the ladder or not! Avoid using a portable ladder when the wind is gusting at high speeds and be sure to tie off the top of your extension ladder so that any unexpected wind gust does not cause it to move or fall over.

Ladders constantly exposed to direct sunlight will wear out - Over long periods of time, ultraviolet light from the sun will slowly deteriorate the fibers in wood and fiberglass ladders. But one short term effect of UV rays is that warnings and instructional stickers applied by manufacturers will fade and become illegible.

While these are not the only hazardous effects that weather can have on our portable ladders, they are some of the most common ones that we can try to avoid during use and storage.



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