True or False: Ladders

1. As long as I can make it safe to use, it doesn’t matter what kind of ladder I choose for a given task. For example, I can use a step ladder in a closed position as a single ladder to reach an upper level.

   False: Ladders may only be used for the purposes for which they are designed. 1910.23(b).

2. So long as a worker can climb up and down a ladder safely, he may carry a load with both hands, particularly if it seems like carrying the load with one hand would be less safe.

   False: The employee must use at least one hand to grasp the ladder when climbing up or down it. Furthermore, the employee must not carry any object or load that could cause him or her to lose balance and fall while climbing up or down the ladder. 1910.23(b).

3. A worker must always face towards the ladder when climbing up or down it, even though he feels he can safely do so facing the opposite direction, particularly when descending and carrying a load.

   True: The employee must face towards the ladder when climbing up or down it. 1910.23(b).

4. If a ladder is found to be defective, you must set it aside rather than use it until you are able to repair it.

   False: Any ladder with a structural or other defect must be immediately tagged “Dangerous, Do Not Use” or similar language, and removed until repaired. 1910.23(b).

5. The cap or top of a stepladder may not be used as a step.

   True: The cap and top step of a stepladder are not used as steps. 1910.23(c).

6. When using a non-self-supporting ladder, whenever practicable, ensure that both top side rails are supported.

   False: The top of a non-self-supporting ladder must always be placed so that both side rails are supported, unless the ladder is equipped with a single support attachment. 1910.23(c).

7. When using a non-self-supporting ladder to reach an upper landing, at least three feet of the top side rails should extend above the landing.
True: Portable ladders used to gain access to an upper landing surface have side rails that extend at least 3 feet (0.9 m) above the upper landing surface. 1910.23(c).

8. **If a ladder is not high enough to safely reach an upper landing, it is preferable to fasten on another ladder section for additional length rather than place the ladder on wooden boxes to achieve the desired height.**

False: Ladders and ladder sections are not tied or fastened together to provide added length unless they are specifically designed for such use. Furthermore, Ladders are not placed on boxes, barrels, or other unstable bases to obtain additional height. 1910.23(c).

9. **A portable ladder should never be moved, shifted, or extended while an employee is on it.**

True: No portable ladder may be moved, shifted, or extended while an employee is on it. 1910.23(c).

10. **Ladders may be stored in areas of light foot or vehicular traffic so long as they are either leaning vertically against a wall or lying horizontally on the floor.**

False: Ladders placed in locations such as passageways, doorways, or driveways where they can be displaced by other activities or traffic: (1) Are secured to prevent accidental displacement; or (2) Are guarded by a temporary barricade, such as a row of traffic cones or caution tape, to keep the activities or traffic away from the ladder. 1910.23(c).

**Resources**

- OSHA Quick Card: Portable Ladder Safety (OSHA 3246-09N-05)
- Portable Ladders: How to Use Them so They Won’t Let You Down (Oregon OSHA 1/16)
- Ladder Safe Work Practices (Virginia Tech, Environment Health and Safety)