



ROLLING, ROLLING, ROLLING... Wagons roll down Lee Ave. Jan. 30 as they journey to the Dixie National Rodeo and Livestock Show held in Jackson. The trip is by horse and wagon and the convoy has to make it to Jackson by Feb. 7. Every year, the Dixie Wagon Wheel group utilizes Camp Shelby as a shortcut for their journey to the state's capital.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Michael Williams, CSJFTC Public Affairs

Ladder and selection are important....

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Ladders are useful tools that, when used properly, serve as a safety system for climbing. Working at an elevated height is inherently dangerous and the safety afforded by a ladder is often circumvented by misuse.

Each year more than 300 deaths are attributed to misuse. More than 160,000 people are injured as a result of falls from ladders due to not following safety precautions. Most injuries are cuts, bruises, and fractures. Common factors contributing to falls are haste, sudden movement, poor quality of footwear and lack of attention. However, the number one cause of ladder accidents is overreach. Making a mistake while using a ladder can change or end your life.

Ladders are built from one of three basic materials – wood, fiberglass and aluminum. The environment of your work site is the first factor in choosing the material from which you ladder is constructed.

For example, if you are working near sources of electricity, a metal ladder should not be used, since aluminum is an effective electrical conductor. Next, consider the duty rating of the ladder. This is an indication of the maximum weight capacity the ladder can safely carry. To figure out the total amount of weight your ladder will be supporting, add your weight plus protective equipment that you will be wearing. Also, add the weight of tools and supplies you are carrying and the weight of tools and supplies stored on the ladder.

There are five categories of ladder duty ratings:

- Type IAA (special duty) 375 pounds
- Type IA (extra heavy duty) 300 pounds
- Type I (heavy duty) 250 pounds
- Type II (medium duty) 225 pounds
- Type III (light duty) 200 pounds

The duty rating can be found on the specification label. Safety standards require a duty rating sticker to be placed on the side of every ladder. Do not assume that a longer ladder

has a higher weight capacity. There is no correlation between ladder length and weight capacity.

There is a wide variety of ladder types to choose from – step, single, articulated, combination, extension, fixed, mobile ladder stands and ladder stand platforms. Probably the most important factor in determining the type of ladder to use for a given job is you work environment and the physical size restrictions.

When climbing a ladder it is safest to utilize “Three Points-of-Contact” because it minimizes the chances of slipping and falling from the ladder. At all time you must face the ladder and have two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder steps or side rails. Also, avoid carrying any objects in either hand that can interfere with your grip of the ladder. In this way you are not likely to lose your balance. Therefore, three points-of-contact cannot be maintained and the chance of falling is increased. You can reduce your chances of falling during the climb by:

- Wear slip resistant footwear.
- Clean the soles of all footwear to maximize traction.
- Use towlines, tool belts or have someone to assist you in moving tools/materials so that your hands are free when climbing.
- Climb deliberately and avoid sudden movements.
- Keep the center of your waist between the ladder side rails when climbing or doing work.

Many of the basic safety rules that apply to most tools also apply to ladders. You should never use ladders in high winds or storms. Always inspect ladders for loose or missing parts and never use a ladder if you feel dizzy or are prone to losing you balance. Before using your ladder, check the safety sticker to determine the load limit and the maximum safe height. Be sure to follow all safety instructions on your ladder.

Ladders are an essential part of many work and home improvement projects, but they must be used properly. As always, safety is the most important consideration on any job.



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