

*I attended a man who had been building a garage. He had climbed the ladder onto the garage roof to nail shingles in place. The roof was about 9 feet high. As he stepped from the ladder onto the roof with his right foot, he stepped on some plastic that was on the roof. His foot slipped, and he fell feet first onto the ground. When he landed, he heard a loud crack. When we arrived with the ambulance, his leg was bent at 90 degree angle, 3 inches below his knee. It was a very nasty break. This shows how easily a fall can happen. Six months later, that man stopped in at the firehouse. He was walking with a cane and had a severe limp. He doubted he would ever go back to the job he once had. He was still in a lot of pain, and not doing very well physically or mentally.*

Every day, someone falls off a ladder. Here are a few tips to think about before you use a ladder.

- *Follow the manufacturer's directions. There is important safety information on the sides of ladders when you purchase them. That information is there for a reason. Get as much safety information as you can before using a ladder.*
- *Use a ladder that is suitable for the job. Don't use a 4 foot ladder for an 8 foot job, and make sure the ladder is in good shape.*
- *When climbing up or down ladders always maintain three points of contact with the ladder, i.e., two feet and one hand.*
- *Don't try to shift or "walk" the ladder when you're on it. This may be tempting if you have to move a very short distance but don't do it. It isn't worth the risk!*
- *Avoid overreaching to do the work. Get down and move the ladder over.*
- *Face the ladder when going up or down.*
- *One last point – if you are uncomfortable with heights, it may be a wise choice to hire someone to do the job for you.*

 ... AT ALL TIMES!