



## Independent workers can still be on the team



way that you can manage, and in a way that shows you care.

Introverts can be respected for the work they do and can get a deserved pat on the shoulder, but it could mean having to show a side of yourself you would rather keep hidden. Here are a few ways to do that:

### 1. Smile, smile, smile.

While it's still unclear why people smile, this simple act is believed to bring great positive effects on our minds and bodies when practiced regularly. Smiling can help introverts to appear more approachable, social, and upbeat. And who wouldn't benefit from a better mood?

### 2. Walk the walk.

It's no secret that straight posture, eye contact, and a head held high are all signs of confidence. Research supports the idea that non-verbal communication, in the form of posture and gestures, constitutes the largest part of how others see us. More importantly, though, it is related to self-respect and self-assurance.

### 3. Talk to your boss.

Discuss ways that would make you feel more secure in your environment, such as working without distractions from others, or why you would rather not socialize after hours. If he or she is open to how you are feeling, you come through by showing an outstanding or upgraded job performance.

Encouragement to be a "team player" is par for the course in many work environments. You are asked to contribute to the team, be part of the team and who knows what else for the team. But what if you don't really want to?

What if you would rather accomplish tasks independently? Small talk; who needs it? And why should you accept help from the team if you prefer to do the work yourself?

There is nothing wrong with thinking this way. Independent workers like to take things at their own pace, put their head down without distractions from others and just get the job done. If you have a boss and co-workers who understand this about you, consider yourself lucky. Most independent workers or introverts have to

put up with the "noise" extroverts or team players bring.

When it comes to good safety practices on the job; however, watching out for each other and working together is very important.

Independent workers can do this if their focus remains the safety and well-being of, not only themselves, but also of their co-workers. Does this mean you have to jump up and down and cheer while watching the latest sports match together in the break room? No. But if you see a co-worker about to make a safety mistake, like not wearing proper PPE or about to trip over a power cord, take a moment to tell them. A small action like this will make you a part of the team in a

## Inside this edition

- Renovation safety tips
  - Hidden dangers on the job
  - Asbestos advice
  - Medicine and pain management
  - WHMIS facts
  - How to spot insurance fraud
  - Be wary of flying particles
  - Tips to prevent catching flu
  - Worried about lead in your water?
  - Improve your writing skills
  - What is carrot blush?
  - Mindful eating helps health
  - Try physiotherapy
  - Protect home from snow melt
- Safety Meeting:**  
Stepladder safety



**Smart Workplace**  
health and safety communications partners

**President & CEO:** Stefan Dreesen  
**Sales:** Alan Haycroft | Liz Slobodin | Kevin Harvey  
**Editor:** Kate Van Hoof-Peeren  
**Contributing Writer:** Bryden Winsby  
**TOLL FREE:** 1-888-655-4800  
info@smartworkplace.ca  
www.smartworkplace.ca

# Important safety tips while renovating



(NC) Renovations and DIY projects are great ways to turn a house into a home. In fact, whether you rent or own, there are many things you can do to make your space your own. However, whether you are undertaking major renovations or small touch-ups, it's important to be aware of any potential exposures to chemicals and pollutants.

By following a few straightforward safety tips, you can keep you and your family safe while giving your home a new look. Here are some guidelines:

**Follow instructions carefully.** Read and follow all safety, usage and disposal instructions every time you use a household chemical product. Look for hazard symbols on the front of the product.

**Wear protective gear.** Protective gear may include gloves, a proper respirator and safety glasses. Product labels will provide more detailed information on any additional safety equipment you should wear.

**Let in fresh, clean air.** Keep your work areas well ventilated. Open windows and doors, run your exhaust fans and work outside whenever possible.

**Take care with composite wood products.** Products such as plywood and particleboard are made of wood pieces or fibres bonded together with glue, which can contain formaldehyde. If you're buying something made of composite wood, such as furniture, cabinets, countertops or flooring, check the label for more information about formaldehyde. Ask retailers, vendors, and manufacturers to help.

**Use low-emission products.** Paint or varnish often has a noticeable smell. The odour comes from emissions that contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Some household chemical products that are labelled as "low emission" give off fewer VOCs. Read the label and choose products that are low in VOCs.

**Prevent exposure to asbestos.** Asbestos can be found in older insulation, cement, plaster, floor and ceiling tiles, house siding and automobile parts. Before doing any renovations, have a professional test for asbestos. If found, hire a qualified asbestos removal specialist to get rid of it before work starts. Do not disturb an area containing asbestos, and never try to remove it yourself.

**Check for lead-based paint.** If your home was built before 1991, it may contain lead-based paint. If you want to find out whether it does, you can send paint chip samples to a lab for analysis or hire a contractor who has the proper x-ray equipment to detect lead on painted surfaces.

**Keep vulnerable people away.** Children, pregnant woman, those with pre-existing health conditions and seniors may be at greater risk to the health effects of exposure to chemicals. When renovating, it is recommended that these groups stay clear of project areas.

Find more safety tips at [canada.ca/healthy-home](http://canada.ca/healthy-home).

## Beware of hidden dangers on the job



(NC) Some jobs are just inherently dangerous to your health and safety, and some might put you at risk — but not for the reasons you may be thinking of.

Statistics show that if you currently work, or have worked, in the construction trade, you are significantly more likely than others to die from an opioid overdose.

Opioid-related deaths have increased significantly since 2003, with 1,474 reported in Ontario in 2018, according to Public Health Ontario. In the first six months of 2019, there were almost a thousand deaths. Of those, 90 percent were accidental, almost three-quarters of the victims were men, and half were between the ages of 25 and 44.

An unexpected risk factor is your occupation -- there is clearly a spike in opioid-related deaths among construction workers. A report last fall by the BC Coroners Service found 55 percent of that province's overdose deaths were workers in the construction and transportation industry.

More research is needed to find out if there is a connection between the physical nature of construction work and the range of pain-causing conditions or injuries it can cause. For example, are construction workers more likely to develop chronic pain or suffer painful complications from on-the-job injuries, get prescribed opioids, and then run into trouble from misusing them?

The available data doesn't offer clear-cut conclusions. But it's important for young adult men working in the trades to approach any use of opioids in pain management with care and caution.

The material contained in this document has been prepared from sources believed to be accurate and reliable. Application of this information to a specific worksite should be reviewed by a safety professional. Anyone making use of the information set forth herein does so at his/her own risk and assumes any and all liability arising therefrom. Specific medical advice should be obtained through consultation with a physician or other trained health care practitioner. Thanks to News Canada for some content and images. © 2020

# What to do if you find asbestos

(NC) Home improvement projects often come with unexpected setbacks and hidden expenses. One that can be especially worrying is finding asbestos.

Health Canada recognizes that breathing in asbestos fibres can cause cancer and other diseases. But the important thing to remember is that asbestos is a hazard to health only when fibres are present in the air and we breathe them into our lungs. Therefore, if the asbestos can be crumbled, pulverized or powdered, resulting in small fibres and clumps of fibres being released into the air, it's a health risk. Examples include insulation, plaster, floor and ceiling tiles.

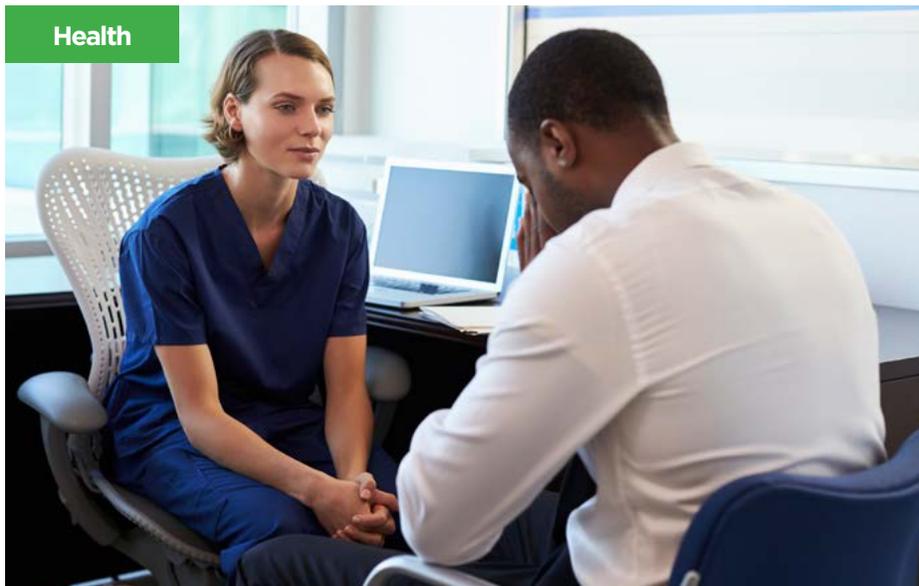
However, some building materials contain asbestos that is not easily broken or crumbled into small pieces, such as roofing shingles, house siding and cement. Asbestos in this form generally doesn't pose a risk because it doesn't easily release airborne fibres unless they are damaged or disturbed.

If you live in a home built before 1990, there is a chance it contains asbestos. The only way to know is to have it tested by a qualified professional.

Fortunately, there is no need to take immediate action or be concerned. Health Canada indicates there are no significant health risks if materials containing asbestos in your home are tightly bound in products and are in good condition, sealed behind walls and floorboards, isolated in an attic or left undisturbed.

Be sure to avoid disturbing or removing asbestos materials yourself. If you are planning renovations and your home has building materials that you think may contain asbestos – like insulation, exterior siding, floor or ceiling tiles – hire a qualified asbestos removal specialist to get rid of it before beginning.

Find more information at [canada.ca/healthy-home](http://canada.ca/healthy-home).



# Pain: What is it and how should you treat it?

(NC) We've all experienced pain before. From stubbing our toes to major accidents, there are two main types of pain: acute and chronic. Knowing the type of pain that you are experiencing is important when it comes to treating it.

**Acute pain** - This type of pain is generally in response to something: a cut, broken bone, kidney stone, surgery or dental procedure. Sometimes, it has no obvious cause, like with migraine headaches.

Acute pain can come on fast and go away in a few days or weeks. It can be mild and easily tolerated, completely disabling or somewhere in between. It can be addressed by a variety of possible treatments, including rest, ice, physical therapy and different types of non-opioid medications.

## Chronic pain

This type of pain lasts beyond the expected healing time for an acute event, usually for more than three months. A range of conditions can cause chronic pain, such as arthritis and other inflammatory illnesses.

For chronic pain, non-opioid or non-pharmaceutical therapies and even practices such as meditation can provide relief in some cases.

## Using opioids to manage pain

Regardless of the type of pain you're trying to manage, opioids – like codeine, fentanyl, hydromorphone, morphine, tramadol and oxycodone – can be an effective option when used appropriately. But they must be used cautiously and carefully.

If you're prescribed opioids, your health-care professional should prescribe the lowest dose and lowest strength possible. If you're being treated outside of a hospital setting, such as by your family doctor, nurse practitioner or dentist, your prescription should be for three days or less in most cases.

More severe acute pain, such as from major surgery, may require a longer course of opioids, but usually not more than seven days. Your health-care professional should monitor your pain and help you stop taking opioids when your pain is reduced.

It's important for your health-care professional to ask you about your pain, health, ability to function at work and at home, and any other issues that may be affecting your health. You must also take responsibility by asking your doctor questions like how to get off the medication when the time comes, and when will that time be.

# What you should know about WHMIS



All workers in Canada have a legal right to know how the materials they work with can affect their health or safety. The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System – WHMIS – is aimed at ensuring safe use, handling or storage of such products in Canadian workplaces.

The main components of WHMIS are hazard identification and product classification, labelling, safety data sheets (SDSs) and worker education and training. Since 2018, WHMIS has been aligned with the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, known as GHS.

Each province and territory has its own Act and Regulations to legislate WHMIS for workers and employers in their jurisdiction.

When any product meets established classification criteria, it is considered a “hazardous product” according to the WHMIS legislation. A supplier must label the product or container and must provide a safety data sheet to its customers.

Like previous WHMIS legislation, the alignment with GHS excluded some types of products from labelling and SDS requirements. These products are regulated by other laws. Three examples are consumer products, explosives and pest control products such as insecticides, herbicides and fungicides.

Consumer products are those that can be purchased in a store and generally are intended to be used in the home. They often include cleaning products, adhesives or lubricants. These products are labelled according to other legislation.

## Updating WHMIS to align with the GHS has resulted in:

- New classification rules and hazard classes.
- New hazard pictograms.
- New supplier label requirements.
- New format for SDSs.

When a hazardous product is used in the workplace, employers are required to educate and train workers on its hazards and safe use. They must ensure that the products are properly labelled (and prepare labels, as needed).

Workers must have access to current SDSs. If employers manufacture a hazardous product that is used on-site, they must prepare an appropriate SDS for it.

Employers also must ensure appropriate control measures are in place.

As for workers, they must participate in WHMIS education and training programs, take necessary steps to protect themselves and their co-workers, and participate in identifying and controlling hazards.

## How to spot insurance fraud

(NC) A few key indicators of insurance fraud can help tip off potential victims, saving them from losing thousands of dollars and failing to have proper insurance coverage in place when it counts.

Seller fraud takes place when fake insurance policies are sold to people in need of insurance. For example, a fraudster may offer discounted insurance to entice people, then take a victim’s money in return for home and auto insurance pink slips that are invalid or forged.

Two of the most common seller scams in Canada are ‘ghost brokers’ and ‘fake brokers’.

Ghost brokers take money for insurance upfront, provide a pink slip showing proof of insurance and then they disappear or ‘ghost’ the customer. Sometimes the slip is merely a forgery. Other times the fraudster will set up an actual policy, download the slip and give it to the victim, then cancel the policy without the victim’s knowledge.

Fake brokers have an actual physical address and may do some legitimate business, such as selling or financing cars. Fake brokers purchase an insurance policy with the name of the client to secure an insurance slip. However, the policy will include incorrect information such as unlisted high-risk drivers or the wrong address, to obtain more favourable rates. Policies can be cancelled and claims can be denied if information is misrepresented, which makes it hard for the consumer to get insurance coverage in the future. Some fake brokers make money by charging a ‘broker fee’, while others are trying to clear the path to sell a car.

Victims are encouraged to report fraudulent activity. Reporting fraud helps stop repeat offenders and reduces insurance premiums for everyone. To report fraud, contact the Insurance Bureau of Canada or find out more at IBC.ca.

## Reminders to protect yourself from the flu

With virus outbreaks claiming the headlines around the world these past weeks, it's always a good idea to remind ourselves about ways we can avoid getting and spreading influenza, a virus we live with day in and day out.

In Canada, an average of 12,200 hospitalizations and 3,500 deaths related to the flu occur each year, according to [canada.ca](http://canada.ca).

The flu is very contagious and can spread quickly and easily. Before you even know you are sick, you can pass the flu on to others and it can affect anyone, including those who are healthy. People at higher risk of serious complications are: young children, adults aged 65 and over, pregnant women, and those living with a chronic health condition.

Here are a few reminders to help protect yourself and others from the flu. You may have heard these before, but it never hurts to repeat them:

- Stay away from people who are sick with the flu.
- If you have the flu, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone. (Your fever should be gone without using a fever-reducing medicine.)
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze - whether or not you have the flu. Throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Try not to touch your nose, mouth, or eyes. This helps keep germs from spreading.
- Clean surfaces and objects that may have flu germs on them, like doorknobs. Use hot, soapy water or a household cleaner.



## Protect yourself from flying particles

Although flying objects can come in all sizes and damage any part of the body that is not protected properly, the eyes often are the most vulnerable - particularly from the small stuff.

There are two kinds of particles that can cause problems. One is wind-carried material such as sawdust and dirt, the other occurs when a hard material contacts another hard material, producing chips that travel at high speed such as a jackhammer breaking rock or concrete, or striking a chisel or punch with a hammer.

The first step toward avoiding the hazards of flying particles is to assess the worksite for possible sources. Easily done in many cases, not so much in others. In the outdoors, for example, wind conditions could be a problem.

### Here are some safety practices to follow:

- Be trained to use the correct tools for the task.
- Inspect tools before use. Do not use tools that have loose or cracked handles or are otherwise damaged.
- Wear required personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Have emergency procedures in place before the job starts.

- Report any hazardous condition or incident to a supervisor regardless of severity.
- Do not tamper with engineering controls such as machine guards or work screens.

With regards to PPE, eye protection can be especially important. A metal shard, wood chip, or piece of plastic ricocheting into the air can strike an eye before you even have a chance to blink. Despite this risk, workers often fail to use proper eye protection. Sometimes it's because they've done the job many times without protection and without trouble. Other times it's because the protection is uncomfortable or they left it somewhere and didn't want to take the time to retrieve it.

Whether glasses, goggle or face shields, each has a different use depending on whatever conditions exist. Safety eyewear must fit correctly and must itself be protected. To prevent scratching the lens, take care when setting your eye protection down or putting it away for the day. Replace the lens or get new glasses when scratches become noticeable.

Clean eye protection regularly at a cleaning station, if available, or use water and a soft absorbent towel such as a paper towel. Don't use your shirt or a rag that collects and holds dirt, it will scratch the lens.



## Worried about lead in your drinking water?

(NC) Health Canada reduced the maximum acceptable concentration of lead in drinking water. But should you be concerned?

Many things can affect the amount of lead that seeps into drinking water. This includes chemistry of the water, age of the plumbing system and length of time the water sits in the pipes.

The most significant source is likely to be from lead service lines. These are the water pipes that link houses to the main water supply.

Some plumbing parts or fittings, such as soldered faucets or valves, may also contain lead that can seep into drinking water.

To find out if there are lead service lines in your area, you can check with your plumber, water utility provider or municipality.

Here are some things you can do if you have lead in your plumbing:

Always let tap water run until it is cold before using it for drinking, cooking and

especially for making baby formula. This is very important after water has been sitting in the pipes for long periods of time, like first thing in the morning.

Don't use water from the hot water tap for cooking or drinking; use cold water instead since hot water increases the leaching of lead and other metals from your plumbing according to [canada.ca](http://canada.ca).

If you have a lead service line, the best solution is to have it replaced, but there is a cost to the homeowner and municipality. Ask your municipality about programs or incentives for replacing lead service lines.

Clean out aerators or screens at the tap regularly to remove any debris that could also contain lead. Replace any brass faucets or valves with fittings that are certified for use with drinking water.

A water filter at the tap can serve as a temporary solution, but this will require proper maintenance and testing to ensure it is working. Make sure the device is certified to the NSF International standard for removal of lead.

## Get an edge at work

(NC) We're all looking for ways to stand out at work, whether it's to get in the boss's good graces or improve our performance to lay the groundwork for a raise or promotion. One way to get an edge is by improving our writing.

While it may seem like something minor, we use writing to communicate our ideas at work all the time – in emails to clients and supervisors, presentations, reports and even performance evaluations that help determine our salary. Writing effectively and persuasively is essential for doing any of these tasks well. An often-forgotten art, good writing can help us stand out among our colleagues and establish us as more polished and professional.

Could your writing use some work? A great resource is the Language Portal of Canada, a free website from Public Services and Procurement Canada. The Portal has plenty of tips and information on clear communication, business communication and writing conventions to help you brush up on your writing skills.

On the Portal, you can also find answers to questions such as these: Do you need a comma after the year in a date? Will this change have a huge affect or effect? When should numbers be spelled out? A bank of language articles and quizzes on subjects like grammar, spelling and vocabulary will help you write more effectively. If you need to write in French for work, the Portal also offers writing guides in French and translation resources for specialized terminology.

Sometimes, improving your career and doing better at work is just a matter of taking advantage of the resources available to you. Learn more at [canada.ca/our-languages](http://canada.ca/our-languages).

## Don't let that carrot blush fool you

What would Bugs Bunny have been without his carrots? That wascally wabbit was always munching them, looking for them, you might say even hoarding them. Could this be why he was too smart to catch?

We are kidding of course, but the cartoonists drawing this beloved character were certainly on to something. Carrots are a particularly good source of beta carotene, fibre, vitamin K1, potassium, and antioxidants. They're a weight-loss-friendly food and have been linked to lower cholesterol levels and improved eye health.

In fact, baby carrots have become a snack favourite for kids and adults alike. These types of carrots are produced from larger carrots that have been processed to be made ready-to-eat. This normally involves removing the skin and cutting the carrot down to a standard size. Sometimes you might notice that there is sometimes a white colour on the carrots. This can be called white blush or carrot blush.

This white blush is not an indication that there is anything unsafe or unhealthy about the carrots, rather it is a sign that the surface of the carrot has dried out. Baby carrots are susceptible to drying out because the skin has been removed. You can try to temporarily remove the whiteness by simply soaking the carrots in water.

Manufacturers and processors will sometimes use a mild solution of water with small amounts of chlorine to remove any potentially harmful bacteria from the surface of fresh produce. This solution is immediately rinsed off using clean water and is not involved in producing the "white blush" in any way. Health Canada considers that this practice can improve the safety of fresh produce when used appropriately.



## Mindful eating helps with health

As with most enjoyable things in life, it's always better if you can take your time. This is especially true with eating habits. No matter how delicious something looks, you are not doing yourself any favours, by wolfing down your food.

It takes approximately 20 minutes from the time you start eating for your brain to send out signals of fullness. Leisurely eating allows ample time to trigger the signal from your brain that you are full. And feeling full translates into eating less.

Recent research presented at a meeting of the North American Association for the Study of Obesity showed that overweight men and women took in fewer calories when they slowed their normal eating pace.

Not only does eating slowly and mindfully help you eat less, it enhances the pleasure of the dining experience. To master the art of slow eating, turn off the TV, put away your phone, and concentrate on your meal.

Eating slowly and taking smaller bites can be very difficult to do, especially when you are busy and famished. But you'll find it easier to slow the pace if you eat regular meals. Or why not start this change with one course first; your dessert? More often than not, we are full when dessert comes, but it is awfully hard to resist that tempting sweet piece of goodness, no matter what it is!

You can have your cake and eat it, too, but try a slower pace. Take a bite, eat it slowly, savour it, and do nothing but enjoy the flavour, texture, and experience of the delicious dessert. You will find that one or two bites give you the sweet indulgence without a lot of extra calories.

Still can't slow down the pace? Try a few other tricks to help you recognize a full belly: Push away from the table, leave the second helpings on the stove, and drink a large glass of water.

# Physiotherapy an option to manage injury



If you have a physical problem or injury that causes you pain and/or restricts your normal movement, daily activities or sports participation, physiotherapy may be an answer for you. If your doctor has recommended physiotherapy, then it is to your advantage to make that appointment.

Physiotherapy is a key part of all sectors of health care. According to conferenceboard.ca, in all provinces and territories, physiotherapists (PTs) have the authority to assess physical function and musculoskeletal, neurological, and cardiorespiratory systems and provide therapeutic exercise programs.

Physiotherapy has proven to be effective in many areas including cardiovascular rehabilitation, chronic lung disease, low back pain, musculoskeletal conditions, stroke, chronic disease, falls, urinary incontinence, and neurological conditions.

## Physiotherapy treatments can include:

- Personalized exercise programs designed to improve your strength, range of motion, and function.
- Massage.
- Joint mobilization and manipulation to reduce pain and stiffness.
- Airway clearance methods to assist people with breathing difficulties.

- Skin and wound care.
- Management of incontinence including pelvic floor re-education.
- Functional activity and tolerance testing and training.
- Work and occupational re-training and return to work planning.
- Prescription, fabrication and application of assistive, adaptive, supportive and protective devices and equipment.

Part of your your therapy will likely include a sheet of easy to follow physiotherapy exercises you can practice at home. For example, good lower back exercises include various stretches and lunges in standing, sitting and lying down positions. Exercises for neck injuries include neck rotation and head tilting.

If your injury is caused or aggravated by lifestyle factors such as frequent heavy lifting or maintaining a bad posture while sitting at your desk, your physiotherapist should provide you with useful tips to improve this and prevent injury re-occurrence.

Remember, it's up to you to follow the advice and exercises your physiotherapist provides. Your eventual recovery depends on your actions during and after therapy.

# Protect your home from snow melt

Spring is on its way, and with that usually comes the "big snow melt", especially this year in many parts of the country.

Managing snow around your property and checking on a few key pieces of equipment in your home will help with keeping melt water running smoothly. Here are a few things you can do to make sure that when the snow melts, the water makes its way to the drain and not into your home:

- Check your eavestroughs and gutters for signs of ice dams and/or remove debris that could slow the flow of water.
- Shovel snow away from the foundation of your home.
- Check the grading in the yard to see that it is sloping away from the foundation, allowing melt water to lead away from your home.
- Extend your downspouts away from the home by at least two meters.
- Check your backwater prevention valve on the main line of your sewer, if your home has one - is it in working condition?
- Most lots drain along the outside edges. Remove snow from these areas.
- Keep the snow in your yard. Shovelling onto streets or lanes could block drains.
- Consider using sandbags to block water from entering low lying areas beside your foundation.
- If water is getting close to your foundation, use an appropriate pump to drain it to the gutter or back lane. Use all equipment properly and follow safety guidelines.

# Climb the stepladder to success

Today's safety meeting will discuss the proper use of stepladders.

Whether it's to change a lightbulb, hang curtains, or to look for something on a very high shelf, most of us have had to use a stepladder at one time or another. The stepladder is a self-supporting portable ladder that is non-adjustable in length, with flat steps and a hinged design for ease of storage. It is intended for use by one person.

## Before using a stepladder, ask yourself:

- Will I be working around electricity or overhead power lines?
- What obstacles might be in the way?
- How high do I need to go?

These questions can help you decide in the type of stepladder you need, or if a stepladder might not be high enough or the right type for the task you need to get done. For example, metal ladders should never be used when dealing with electricity. You should choose a nonconductive ladder made of wood or fiberglass.

If you would have to stand on the top rung or the very top of the stepladder, then your ladder is too short. You should never stand on the top rung or step of the step ladder. This makes the ladder very unstable and prone to tip over.

## The next step is to give your ladder a little inspection before you use it. Check for:

- Grease, dirt or other contaminants that could cause slips or falls.
- Paint or stickers (except warning or safety labels) that could hide possible defects.
- Structural damage such a split or bent side rails, broken or missing rungs or steps, and missing or damaged safety devices. A stepladder in good condition has feet firmly attached, clean treads and secure locking devices.

If you are satisfied with its condition, make sure you put it in a good position. A stepladder in a good position:

- Is fully open.
- Is locked into place.
- Will not move at the bottom.
- Stands on a surface that is: firm, level, clear, dry and not slippery.

When climbing the stepladder, make sure you wear shoes with non-slip soles, even if you are only planning to use it for a few minutes inside. Do not climb a closed stepladder or on the back of a stepladder, and don't climb a ladder if you are not physically up to the task.

## Here are a few more tips to keep in mind now that you are safely on the ladder:

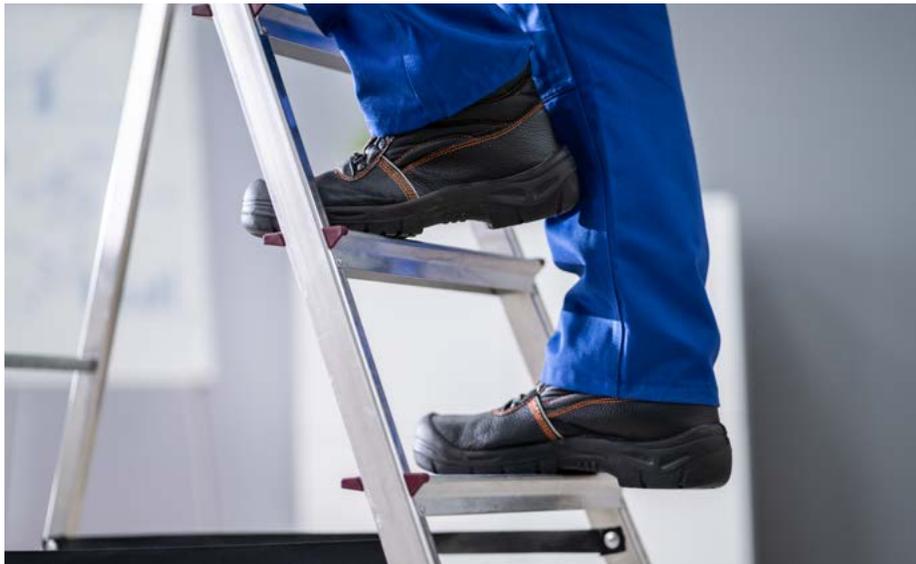
- Do not over-reach, lean to one side or try to move a ladder while on it. Climb down and then reposition the ladder closer to your work.
- Do not exceed the maximum load capacity or duty rating of a ladder.
- Do not let more than one person on a single-sided stepladder.
- Keep both feet on the same rung or step throughout the task.
- Only carry light materials and tools.
- Maintain three points of contact at the working position. This means two feet and one hand, or when both hands need to be free for a brief period, two feet and the body supported by the stepladder.



These tips are repeated in your handout. Thanks for your attention today.

# Climb the stepladder to success

Whether it's to change a lightbulb, hang curtains, or to look for something on a very high shelf, most of us have had to use a stepladder at one time or another. The stepladder is a self-supporting portable ladder that is non-adjustable in length, with flat steps and a hinged design.



When climbing the stepladder, make sure you wear shoes with non-slip soles, even if you are only planning to use it for a few minutes inside. Do not climb a closed stepladder or on the back of a stepladder, and don't climb a ladder if you are not physically up to the task.

### Here are a few more tips to keep in mind now that you are safely on the ladder:

- Do not over-reach, lean to one side or try to move a ladder while on it. Climb down and then reposition the ladder closer to your work.
- Do not exceed the maximum load capacity or duty rating of a ladder.
- Do not let more than one person on a single-sided stepladder.
- Keep both feet on the same rung or step throughout the task.
- Only carry light materials and tools.
- Maintain three points of contact at the working position. This means two feet and one hand, or when both hands need to be free for a brief period, two feet and the body supported by the stepladder.

### Before using a stepladder, ask yourself:

- Will I be working around electricity or overhead power lines?
- What obstacles might be in the way?
- How high do I need to go?

These questions can help you decide in the type of stepladder you need, or if a stepladder might not be high enough or the right type for the task you need

to get done. For example, metal ladders should never be used when dealing with electricity. You should choose a nonconductive ladder made of wood or fiberglass.

If you would have to stand on the top rung or the very top of the stepladder, then your ladder is too short. You should never stand on the top rung or step of the step ladder. This makes the ladder very unstable and prone to tip over.

- 1 When climbing a stepladder you should make sure that:
  - A. Your shoes have non-slip soles.
  - B. The television is turned off.
  - C. The windows are closed.
- 2 You should not overreach on a ladder.
 

True      False
- 3 It's best to use a ladder made of non-conductive materials when working with electricity.
 

True      False
- 4 It's okay if one rung on a ladder is broken.
 

True      False
- 5 While working on a ladder you should:
  - A. Keep both feet on the same rung or step.
  - B. Sit on the top of it.
  - C. None of the above.
- 6 It's okay to climb a closed stepladder.
 

True      False

ANSWERS: 1. A 2. True 3. True 4. True 5. A 6. False

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Have meeting attendees sign this sheet:


Comfort Zone is published once a month by Smart Workplace Inc. www.smartworkplace.ca ©2020 Smart Workplace Inc. Subscribers are allowed to make copies of this document for distribution within their location only. For more copies call 1-888-655-4800. The information presented herein has been compiled from various sources believed to be reliable; however it cannot be assumed that all acceptable safety measures are listed. While every effort is made to ensure that information and recommendations contained in this publication are the best current opinions on the topic, no guarantee or warranty is made by Smart Workplace Inc. as to the absolute correctness or sufficiency of the content.