Stepstools and ladders are very helpful, but when they are used improperly can be dangerous and potentially lead to slips, trips and falls – and other injuries. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, most industry incidents involve slips, trips and falls. These injuries cause 15 percent of all accidental deaths, and are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of fatalities.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STAY SAFE?**

Maintain three points of contact at all times when climbing ladders. Always keep both hands free and face the ladder or stepstool to ensure three points of contact. Maintain one hand and two feet, or two hands and one foot, when climbing or descending a stepstool or ladder. Never attempt to move the ladder while standing on it and avoid sudden movements. Follow the guidelines and tips below to stay safe in your workplace:

- Place the stepstool level on the ground, as near as possible to the object you are trying to reach
- If you have to stand on the top step of the stepstool to reach the destination, switch to a stepladder instead; do not overreach with the stepstool
- Ensure the stool or ladder is safe and stable to use before climbing
- Inspect the feet to make sure they are level with the ground
- Never skip a step when climbing or descending
- Do not wear open toe shoes, sandals or high heels when climbing a stool or ladder
- Never stand on the top step of the stool or ladder
- Always face the stool or ladder when climbing or descending

**STAY AWAY FROM THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:**

- Avoid using chairs (with or without wheels) if a stool or ladder is not available
- Do not use tables or desks either; they can tip easily when your weight is shifted to a specific direction
- If you need to stretch or stand on your tip-toes while on a stepstool, you need a ladder
- If you feel dizzy or are prone to poor balance, ask for assistance

**IF YOU DON’T HAVE A STEPSTOOL OR STEPLADDER NEARBY:**

- Find out where the nearest one is stored and how to access it
- Ask custodial staff or maintenance to deliver one at the earliest convenience
- Do not use a chair, desk or table as a substitute; wait until proper equipment is available