

Safety is Job One:

As some of you may remember, I was a National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO) for many years. During that time, I have seen and heard and experienced some pretty amazing incidents that have happened to construction workers. By the way, ham radio operators installing antennas and other devices are **CONSTRUCTION WORKERS** in the real sense of the word and should follow the same rules. Of course, you are not covered by WCB or any of the other authorities, but you still need to set some guidelines on safety whenever doing this kind of work.

So, what made me think of this? I received a phone call from a ham last week that astonished me because he knew better. By the way **ALL INCIDENTS ARE PREVENTABLE**. He had a problem with one of his antennas after that snowstorm and decided to go up on his roof which was covered in snow and lost his footing and slid down it and over the edge. He kicked over the ladder on the way and grabbed on to the gutter which of course slowed his descent a bit but couldn't hold his considerable weight and pulled away from the house and he landed unceremoniously on the deck. Fortunately, he's ok and no serious damage was done although from what he told me the damage inflicted by his wife afterwards was considerable.

So, what should be done to make sure you are being safe? Here's a list:

1. Scope out the work before you climb and make a plan and think of anything that could go wrong and plan for it (remember Murphy's Law)
2. Do a complete **HAZARD ASSESSMENT** before beginning the work
3. Check the condition of the roof. Is it covered in snow or is it wet or slippery?
4. What tools do you need and have them available at the time and a convenient way of getting them up to where you need them. Avoid carrying them if possible.
5. Put up a ladder so that it is at least a meter (3 feet) above the roof line and tie it off so it will not fall over
6. By ensuring the ladder is at least a meter above the roofline you will have something to hold on to as you step on and off the roof without having to lean over and thereby disturbing your balance.
7. Keep the three-point contact on the ladder at all times when climbing or descending from it.
8. Do not lean out on either side of a ladder to do the work and make sure you do not stand on the top or the second rung from the top on any kind of ladder
9. **DO NOT** lean a stepladder up against a wall. It is not stable and will not be a safe platform on which to work.
10. Make sure the spreader arms on a step ladder are set and locked in place
11. Wear the proper PPE, good boots, hard hat, if necessary, gloves, harness, lanyard, safety belt and line and tie off if necessary.
12. Pull tools up with a lanyard in a basket or bag and tie it off in a convenient place.
13. Do the work according to a well thought out plan and follow it.
14. Think safety at all times and don't take short cuts

So, you can see it is quite easy to make sure you are going to be safe. Too many of our friends have been seriously injured or even lost their lives because they didn't **THINK IT THROUGH. Don't become a statistic.**

