

# HOME SAFE

## Outdoor Repairs



Are you doing outdoor home maintenance? Perhaps you are using a ladder to do some painting, repairing or gutter cleaning. Or maybe your to-do list includes using a power tool. Check off these safety tips to avoid injuries:

**LADDER SAFETY:** I am taking precautions so I don't fall. I always make sure to have a helper hold the bottom of the ladder, and I position the ladder so that it is away from power lines before I climb.

**POWER TOOLS:** To protect my eyes from flying debris, I always wear safety goggles when using power tools.

**ELECTRICAL:** When using extension cords outdoors, I make sure cords are undamaged, clearly labeled for outdoor use, and plugged into proper, grounded receptacles.

**DECK SAFETY:** I have my deck professionally inspected to make sure it's structurally sound, to prevent a deck collapse.

**Falls:** Falls from ladders can cause injuries ranging from bruises to fractures, and even death. Before you climb up on that ladder to do some home repairs, painting, or gutter cleaning, ask someone to “spot” you. A partner is very important to help stabilize the ladder as you climb. First, make sure your ladder is set up on stable ground. Once you climb, never stand on the top rung of any ladder, and be sure no one—including pets—walks underneath the ladder. In addition, keep the ladder away from power lines and live electrical wires to [prevent electrocution](#). If you are a senior, use extra caution with ladders. Those 65 and older are 80% more likely than other adults to visit an emergency room for injuries involving ladders or stools.

**Power Tools:** Plan on using power tools? Make sure you read the directions first, and follow the instructions in the owner's manual. One power tool that is regularly involved in injuries is a table saw. No matter how expert you are, always use the blade guard for through cuts, and use a push stick for small pieces. Protect yourself while you work: wear snug clothing and remove jewelry that could get caught in tools. In addition, wear safety goggles to protect your eyes from flying debris; and always keep hands away from moving parts. When using power tools, never carry them by the cord, and keep cords away from heat, oil, and sharp edges. Bear in mind that power tools and alcoholic beverages do not mix well; stay sober to stay safe.

**Electricity:** Electrical power used outdoors poses a shock or [electrocution hazard](#). Make sure that extension cords are properly grounded, not damaged with exposed wires, rated for outdoor use and suitable for the intended current of the equipment you're using. Avoid using corded power tools in damp or wet conditions. Ensure that receptacles used to supply outdoor power have properly tested ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection, or use a portable GFCI.

**Decks:** Nothing compares to relaxing outdoors on your deck, especially if you have been cooped up in the house. But before heading out to the deck, make sure you check for loose hardware (nails or screws), rotting boards, and eroding foundations. Why is this important? CPSC estimates that between 2016 and 2019, there were about 2,900 injuries and two deaths associated with collapses/failures of decks, balconies and porches. If you can, have your deck professionally inspected (per your state’s quarantine restrictions.) Ask the inspector about the benefits of regular application of an oil- or water-based penetrating coating (stains, sealants) to older CCA (chromated copper arsenate)-treated wood—those coatings can reduce potential exposure to chemical residues.

To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury go online to [www.SaferProducts.gov](http://www.SaferProducts.gov)



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