

HOME WORK

Check your ladder for safety before you climb and work

ASK DAD



HARRY JACHYM

If you need to use a ladder, use it safely. Here are a few tips and friendly reminders before you venture up the ladder.

Inspect the ladder before each use. Look for damaged or loose parts, cracks or anything that just doesn't look right in the ladder's structure. If a problem is found, repair or replace the ladder. Avoid painting wooden ladders because the paint only hides potential defects.

Be certain the ladder is rated to carry your weight, which should include any tools or materials you're using.

Don't climb too high

Don't climb beyond the third step from the top on extension ladders and the second step from

the top on stepladders. If you must reach to either side of the ladder, keep your belt buckle or mid-section in the area between the rails, which will keep you balanced and you won't reach too far.

Avoid using metal ladders in the vicinity of electric lines. There's almost always a chance of electric contact. Many safety agencies recommend to avoid metal ladders altogether.

Set up the ladder on a firm, level surface. When using a stepladder, make sure the ladder is fully open with the spreader bars locked. Extension ladders should be placed so the feet are one quarter of the working length away from where the ladder contacts the building. A simple way to do this is put your toes on the ladders' feet. (Your fingers should just touch the rung closest to arm level.)

In high traffic areas, barricade around the ladder. Keep the ground around the base of the ladder clear. If there is a chance of the ladder moving, tie it. Avoid ladder work on windy, stormy or rainy days.

Always face the ladder when climbing or descending and maintain the three-point contact with two feet/one hand or one foot/two hands on the ladder. (Actually four-point contact is

safer, but you won't move very fast.) Carry tools in a pouch, or raise them with a line.

Don't leave tools on the steps or rungs. These can easily drop on someone if the ladder is moved.

Avoid wearing loose clothing. Never allow another person to use the same ladder you are using.

Never, ever "walk" a ladder. Get off a ladder to move it. What may have been funny in the movie "Animal House" wasn't on a job site where I watched a guy attempt this.

And probably the one tip that says it all is use common sense.

Volunteering

For the past several days my wife and I have been working on what I would consider the most rewarding construction project I've ever been involved with. We started June 2 to build a home with other volunteers in the Habitat for Humanity of Western Wayne County's Plymouth Blitz Build and we plan to turn over the keys to the owners on June 17.

This project is near completion, but there are still others continuing. If you can spare some time, please contact Habitat of Western Wayne at 734-459-7744. It's a great experience. Harry Jachym, a licensed builder, lives in Plymouth and teaches building trades to high school students.

The world of appliances evolves

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

Maytag has tried to purchase Amana Refrigeration for the past 40 years, and finally, Amana Refrigeration agreed recently to a purchase price of more than \$300 million. The transaction will be completed this fall, and you can expect Maytag to make a big splash with the classy Amana refrigerator.

It was only eight years ago that Maytag purchased several other manufacturers with low end prices and slapped the name "Maytag" on them. The end result in the past few months has been a clean sweep of management and people coming out of retirement to again run the company. I predict Maytag will come out with an even stronger image than they've shared with consumers in the good, old years.

Consumer aid

State Attorney General Jen-

For the past eight years, many repair companies have gone out of business and the trend continues to grow.

appliance service you receive will come from a certain major retailer.

Cleaner than ever

A testing laboratory has established safety guidelines for dishwashers and now manufacturers will decide how to implement these improvements. When these products become available, homeowners in the United States will have the cleanest dishes and silverware in the world. Thanks to the people behind the scenes who make this happen.

The U.S. Department of Energy has set goals for manufacturers of washing machines. Washers in the next few years will save energy consumption and water usage and will cost the consumer a lot more money than today. We must always be concerned about the earth, but the question remains, will it wash my clothes better or not?

Joe Gagnon can be heard on WJR-AM 760 every Saturday and Sunday mornings. He is a past president of the Society of Consumer Professionals. His second book, "The Words and Wisdom of The Appliance Doctor" is available in book stores. His telephone number is (313) 873-9789.

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Jeffrey Moss is vice-president of Advance Plumbing Supply Co. in Walled Lake and Detroit. Call (800) 360-7474 toll-free. Have a plumbing question? Write to Jeffrey at Advance Plumbing Supply Co., 1977 E.W. Maple Rd., Walled Lake, MI 48390.

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