

LADDERS, SCAFFOLDS AND LIFTS

THIS YEAR'S TOP MODELS ARE SAFE, VERSATILE AND MADE IN THE USA

Thirty years ago almost no one would have predicted the safety innovations leading the ladder, lift and scaffold market today. As safety regulations drive employers to work to reduce injuries, manufacturers are answering with products that are nothing like your father's stepladder.

HY-BRID LIFTS

Easy, efficient, ergonomic — contractors would love to use these words to describe the equipment they use on job sites. Sadly, ladders and scaffolding are usually described as bulky, time-consuming and unproductive.

With elevated projects, operators usually come to a point where they

can't reach any farther off a platform to work efficiently; they need to move the equipment to continue to work. Adjusting efficiently to changing work environments determines whether or not laborers complete a job ahead of schedule or on time; and the right piece of equipment is key to adapting.

Aerial lifts easily adapt to changing work environments. These lifts are available in push-around, electrically-driven and hydraulically-driven models, each with specific features and benefits that virtually eliminate extra labor associated with ladders and scaffolding," observes Justin Kissinger, marketing manager, Hy-Brid Lifts. "Since ladders require constant



KISSINGER

The Hy-Brid HB 1230 features a slide-out platform extension that enables workers to achieve up-and-over access more safely.



up-and-down movement and scaffolding needs repositioning, it's worth considering using lifts that support a wide range of materials and tools."

Some manufacturers offer lifts with a compact footprint that are easy to move through a job site. These lifts easily work in tight areas on job sites that are typically reserved only for ladders or scaffolding.

"For the best maneuverability, look for a compact footprint and a zero-turn radius for easy navigation around corners, through hallways and under overhead fixtures and support beams. These lifts are narrow enough to fit through door frames and even inside elevators."

Recent studies show that falls account for more injuries than almost any other workplace incident. According to a 2012 National Council of Compensation Insurance Report, falls accounted for more than

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JLG's LiftPod FT140 portable lift machine features a platform height of 13 feet, six inches and a working height of 19 feet, six inches. It has a platform capacity of 330 pounds.

"The fantastic thing about the FT series is what it offers the operator in comfort and productivity," Kreutzwiser adds. "Operators can work with confidence, using both hands for the job, instead of being constrained by the requirement to maintain three points of contact at all times."

In this industry, the only constant is change. JLG prides itself on having a line of sight into what changes are coming so that it can adapt its lines to any resulting effects.

"We are heavily engaged with the bodies and associations that govern our industry and have personnel assigned to many of the global regulatory committees to enable us to guide the industry toward a safer and higher-reaching future," Kreutzwiser concludes.

GRANITE INDUSTRIES

"Traditional utility scaffolding and ladders have experienced very little innovation over the last 30 years," begins Jeremy Rupp, marketing director for Granite Industries. "The process of climbing up and down the ladders and scaffolding to move and adjust the unit involves significant time and energy. Tired workers are more likely to make mistakes in workmanship and are more prone to injuries."

Scaffolding and ladders also

Granite Industries' Power Snappy Motorized Work Platform is manufactured in Ohio. Its platform adjusts from 24 to 108 inches (roughly a 15-foot working height). Companies using it have realized savings of 30 to 35 percent over traditional ladders.

present many safety concerns. They must be maintained and used properly — and even then, the strain put on workers is significant.

"The Power Snappy motorized utility scaffold is a game changer as it increases safety and productivity," Rupp states. "This new system cuts job times by a proven 30 percent."

The unit is powered by two electric hub motors and a robust rechargeable battery pack. It is easily moved by a joystick controller. It is much safer than traditional ladders, while still offering five feet of adjustable platform height. A complete guardrail wraps around the top of the unit, providing additional fall protection. It is more nimble than an aerial lift and safer for use where weight limits are an issue.

"The Power Snappy is easily dismantled and fits in the bed of a pickup truck," Rupp adds. "It has been in production since 2009 and is an established, reliable option for contractors, electricians, HVAC and many others. It consistently saves time, money and improves safety."



RUPP



The Little Giant SafeFrame ladder removes the top rung to reduce top-step falls. A Ground Cue indicator alerts users when they have reached the bottom step and each leg ratchets up to 6.25 inches for a level stance.

LITTLE GIANT LADDER SYSTEMS

Big box retail has been tough on ladders, not just for independent retailers trying to sell them, but for the customer using them. This fight for the ladder aisle in the big box is essentially a race to the bottom based on price. One result of this race to the bottom is that, today, almost no one thinks of ladders as safety equipment, and they should.

"The statistics on ladder-related injuries and deaths are not good, and they are not improving over time," states Dave Francis, national safety director, Little Giant Ladder Systems. "Today, 2,000 people will be injured while using a traditional ladder. About 100 people



FRANCIS

will suffer a long-term or permanent disability. And one person will die. Thousands of families are horribly changed each year."

OSHA now holds a yearly stand-down for fall prevention, emphasizing ladder safety and better training. In 2014, ladder safety issues leapt from seventh to second on OSHA's list of most common safety violations. And many industries now require workers to tie off while using a portable ladder. The "Ladders Last" movement is gaining momentum in heavy industry. Companies are banning traditional ladders from their job sites, forcing contractors and workers to find other solutions because ordinary ladders are their number-one source of injury expense.

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by Tom Hammel

“Little Giant Ladder Systems sees this climate as an amazing opportunity to fill the void created by the race to the bottom that is consuming the ladder industry,” Francis continues. “More importantly, we can help prevent injuries and save lives with industry-leading safety innovations. Our new Safe-Frame stepladder is designed to prevent three of the most common causes of ladder injuries and is changing the way professionals use stepladders.”

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“There is a need for safer climbing equipment that is not being satisfied by the box. Knowledgeable and innovative independent distributors have a huge opportunity to sell safety to industries that are increasingly desperate for it.”

MICHIGAN LADDER

“While we have observed a variety of trends over the years, two in particular are among the most interesting,” begins Tom Harrison, president and owner, Michigan Ladder Company. “The first is a shift in demand to our 300-pound, type 1A ladders. Historically, we have sold a wide variety of ladders across all duty ratings, and we still do; however, sales have consolidated around the type 1A, 300-pound rated ladder.



HARRISON

By a wide margin, Michigan Ladder's best sellers are its 1A, 300-pound rating ladders. The fact that most Michigan Ladder products are made in the USA is also a strong selling point.



The second trend Harrison observes is a preference for products made in the USA. He believes that both of these trends have accelerated since the downturn.

“As the oldest ladder manufacturer in the United States, founded in 1901, we are proud that the majority of everything we sell is manufactured in the United States,” Harrison stresses. “We have expanded our manufacturing capacity to meet the increased demand due to these trends. We produce fiberglass, wood

and aluminum ladders in the United States, making us the only ladder manufacturer in the country to do so.”

WERNER LADDER

The key trends that continually influence and shape ladder and scaffolding product development include safety, durability and productivity. Werner is constantly developing climbing products, and specifically



WARD

ladders to fit a variety of applications and needs.

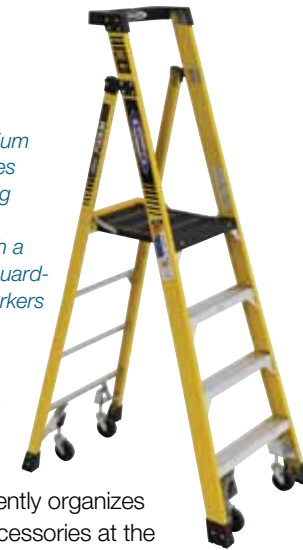
“The first step in ladder selection is choosing the right style of ladder for the job,” says Dan Ward, national safety training manager for Werner-Co. “New styles of ladders, such as the Podium, offer users greater range of motion and make using a ladder

more comfortable when standing for long periods of time. The Podium Ladder is ideal for painting and projects that require working at fixed heights. The Podium Ladder's extra-large standing platform makes the user feel almost as if he is standing on the ground.”

Next, select the height — how high do you need to reach? Finally, select performance — how much weight will be on the ladder? For example, a bundle of shingles weighs approximately 70 pounds, so a person's weight plus that 70 pounds must be less than the ladder's load capacity or duty rating.

In addition to safety and comfort, the Podium Ladder was developed to enhance user productivity. For example, the Podium Ladder securely

Werner's Podium Ladder features a large working platform that, combined with a wraparound guard-rail, allows workers two-handed, 360-degree freedom of movement for maximum comfort.



and conveniently organizes tools and accessories at the top of the ladder, yielding fewer trips up and down, saving the worker time and energy.

“The ladder's top is also transformed to serve as a wraparound guardrail for total freedom of movement,” Ward adds. “The Podium's newly designed Edge360 bracing system increases the size of a ladder footpad, braces the first step and provides protection at every angle.” CS

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