

# Flatbed Ladders for Climbing on Flatbed Trailers

## The Problem

- Workers are often required to climb on and off flatbed trailers to retrieve supply shipments and unload/load equipment.
- It is difficult to safely limb on and off the flatbed trailer because it has very few handholds, inadequate steps and potentially slippery surfaces.
- Getting off trailer is often achieved by workers jumping down because it is the quickest means to get down and there is no method incorporated to safely get off using three point contact.
- A study that analyzed injury claims of falls from trucks, as recorded in the database of the Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) for the year 1997, identified 352 claims involving a fall which occurred from a truck, trailer, or the cargo, and the costs associated with the 352 claims was over 5 million dollars.<sup>1</sup>



*Getting on flatbed trailer using the rub rail and bumper for support*

## One Solution

- Using a flatbed trailer ladder, like the Deckmate Ladder, allowed workers to maintain three point contact while getting on and off the trailer which reduces the likelihood of slips and falls.
- The lightweight ladder can be hung off the rub rails or permanently installed using a bracket for cargo-vans and dump trucks without rub rails.



*Getting on flatbed trailer using a flatbed ladder*

## How It Works

- The worker unfolds the portable ladder, then lifts the ladder up so the hooks are positioned inside the rub rails of the trailer.
- The grab handle is then inserted into the holder on the ladder to allow the worker to maintain three point contact at all times.

- The ladder is equipped with anti-slip grating to reduce contact with slippery surfaces while climbing onto the trailer.

## Benefits

- The use of this product reduces awkward postures from climbing onto the trailer using the wheels, bumper and rub rails for support, which will reduce injury or discomfort.
- The flatbed ladder eliminates the worker's incentive to jump off the trailer when getting off the flatbed. Jumping from elevated surfaces creates high impact forces which transfer high loads to the joints. By using the ladder instead of jumping from the trailer, injury to the back, knee and ankle will be reduced.
- Productivity should improve, especially if the worker is required to repetitively climb on/off the trailer.
- The raised grating on the step improves traction in slippery conditions and reduces the potential for slips and falls.

## For More Information

- Local contractor tool and equipment suppliers or rental companies may be another source of information on products.

<sup>1</sup>Jones, D. and Switzer-McIntyre, S. (2003). Falls from trucks: A descriptive study based on a worker's compensation database. *Work*, 20, 179-184.

The information was used as part of a project "Kramer, D., Bigelow, P., Vi, P., Garritano, E., Wells, R. Encouraging construction companies to adopt innovations to reduce MSDs using different knowledge transfer techniques. 2008-2011. Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (Ontario)". In partnership with the Infrastructure Health and Safety Association of Ontario and CRE-MSD.