

TITLE: 2169 THE CASE OF THE LADDER BANDIT: AN INVESTIGATION BY THE MAYBERRY DEPUTY

LENGTH: 15 MINUTES

PRODUCTION YEAR: 2003

PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:

The Mayberry Deputy is called to the plant to solve a rash of ladder-related injuries in this entertaining video. To catch the "ladder bandit" responsible for these mishaps, the deputy and an accomplice go undercover during their investigation. As the case unfolds, the plant manager begins to doubt the deputy's investigative abilities as he and his accomplice repeatedly blow their cover and have accidents when using ladders. After the Mayberry Sheriff assures him that the deputy often pretends to be inept to trick suspects into incriminating themselves, the plant manager holds a meeting to announce that the case has been solved: the "ladder bandit" is actually anyone who chooses to take chances or shortcuts when using ladders even though he or she knows the appropriate procedures that should be followed. The deputy is given credit for proving that the employees could recognize unsafe use of ladders when they saw others do it, but failed to recognize it in themselves.

Topics include using the right ladder for the job, the belt buckle rule, maintaining three-point contact, dangers of using chairs, pallets or other items as ladders, safety precautions for step ladders, straight and extension ladder stability and the consequences of taking chances or shortcuts.

SHOOTING LOCATION: A variety of industrial and settings

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES: After watching the program, the participant will be able to explain the following:

- Why taking chances and shortcuts with ladders is so hazardous;
- Why it is important to always select and use the right ladder for the job;
- Safety precautions for step, straight and extension ladders;
- The importance of the belt buckle rule, maintaining three-point contact and other precautions for maintaining ladder stability.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT:

SYNOPSIS OF STORY

After a rash of suspicious ladder injuries at an area manufacturing facility, the plant manager calls an expert in the field of investigation: the Mayberry Deputy. Upon the deputy's arrival, the plant manager explains the situation and leaves the deputy with Bubba. A very gullible employee, Bubba listens to the deputy brag about his investigative skills as the two walk past several obvious unsafe ladder situations without notice. Bubba becomes the deputy's helper. Tom, a wise old veteran of the plant, looks on in obvious amusement as if he knows the deputy is off to a poor start.

After a brief walk through the plant, the deputy insists on conducting interviews with the ladder injury victims. As each victim recalls his injury, the deputy excitedly makes notes about the incident as if these clues indicate a relationship between all of the injuries. Although it appears that unsafe use of ladders is the root cause of each incident, the deputy concludes that someone, the "ladder bandit," is responsible for the injuries. Bubba and the deputy decide to go undercover to catch the bandit.

Their plan to pose as "real workers" involves the use of disguises and different types of ladders in a variety of situations. Not only do they blow their cover in each instance, they also are involved in some type of ladder accident. After witnessing several of these incidents, Tom goes to the plant manager and tells him the deputy obviously has no idea what he is doing. Having reviewed the deputy's notes from the employee interviews, the plant manager calls the Mayberry Sheriff to verify the deputy's credentials. The sheriff assures him that the deputy often pretends to be inept to trick suspects into incriminating themselves.

The plant manager then calls a big meeting in which he explains how the victim's unsafe actions actually caused each of the injury incidents. He then announces the case has been solved: the "ladder bandit" is actually anyone who chooses to take chances or shortcuts when using ladders even though he or she knows the appropriate procedures that should be followed. The deputy is given credit for proving that the employees could recognize unsafe use of ladders when they saw others do it, but failed to recognize it in themselves. The plant then gives the deputy a grand send-off for conducting a successful investigation.

EMPLOYEE INJURIES

Injury #1

Jerry was verifying some company drawings by checking them against information on the nameplates of plant equipment. He was using an eight-foot step ladder to get up to an elevated transformer, but he couldn't see the nameplate. He decided to climb to the very top of the step ladder to get a better view, then lost his footing and fell to the floor.

Safety Lesson: *Never stand on the top two steps on a step ladder; it's too easy to lose your balance. If your step ladder is too short, climb down and get a taller ladder.*

Injury #2

Tony was climbing a straight ladder to reach an upper level of the plant so he could service an HVAC unit. The ladder wouldn't quite reach the upper level, but he managed to make it up okay. When he began to climb back down the ladder, he knocked the ladder over with his foot as he tried reach for it. He then fell from the upper deck.

Safety Lesson: *Always make sure your ladder extends at least three feet above the level to which you are climbing; this makes it much easier to get on and off the ladder. You should also tie the ladder to something solid to provide more stability and to make sure it doesn't fall over.*

Injury #3

Frank was climbing an extension ladder to reach a fire alarm circuit he was about to troubleshoot. When he got to the top of the ladder, he discovered the circuit box was off to his side and he could barely reach it. He then tried to "hop" the ladder closer to the box, but it wouldn't move. After leaning out to the side to reach the work, he lost his balance and fell to the floor.

Safety Lesson: *Never allow your belt buckle to extend beyond the rails of an extension ladder (the belt buckle rule) and never try to "hop" the ladder over to the work. If you discover you can't reach the work safely, you should always climb down and move the ladder.*

Injury #4

Kelly was storing some files on the top shelf in the personnel closet. She couldn't reach the shelf, so she climbed onto her chair to reach it. Still unable to reach the shelf, she put a foot on the armrest for additional elevation. She then lost her balance and ended up on the floor.

Safety Lesson: *Never use pallets, forklifts, boxes, chairs, or similar items as a substitute for a proper ladder or step stool. Always take the time to go and get the right ladder or stool for the job.*

Injury #5

An employee standing on a ladder next to a door is knocked off the ladder when someone (the deputy) opens the door.

Safety Lesson: *Never set a ladder directly in the path of a swinging door or other location where you cannot be seen by others.*

THE DEPUTY'S UNDERCOVER INCIDENTS

Incident #1

The deputy leaned a step ladder against a wall and climbed up it. One of the injury victims noticed this unsafe act and told the deputy this was unsafe.

Safety Lesson: *Step ladders should not be used in a situation where a straight ladder is required. Straight ladders have feet that pivot and stay flat on the floor when the ladder is at an angle; step ladders don't.*

Incident #2

The deputy placed a ladder against the wall at a steep angle and proceeded to climb it. As he climbed, the ladder swayed back and forth and began to fall. An injury victim quickly rushed to his aid, but Bubba assumed it was the ladder bandit and attempted to apprehend him. In the meantime, the unsteady ladder and the deputy fell to the floor.

Safety Lesson: *Use the 4:1 rule when placing straight ladders against walls, one foot of distance from the wall for every four feet of height.*

Incident #3

Making sure he had the proper ladder that wasn't too close to the wall, the deputy climbed an extension ladder he had placed in an aisle way. An injury victim saw a forklift backing toward the ladder and tried to intervene, but Bubba grabbed the victim before he could stop the forklift. The forklift collided with the ladder and the deputy fell into a stack of boxes.

Safety Lesson: *Put up a barricade or have a person stand watch when using a ladder in areas frequented by pedestrians and work vehicles.*

LADDER SAFETY TIPS:

- Inspect every ladder before using it. If you discover damage to the feet, rails, rungs or other components, don't use it; mark it out of service and get another ladder.
- When using a step ladder, make sure the spreader bars are fully opened and locked.
- Always remember that a step ladder is designed to be self-supporting. They are not to be leaned against a wall or other structure.
- Use the belt buckle rule any time you are on a ladder by always keeping your belt buckle between the side rails. If you can't reach your work area and keep your belt buckle between the side rails, you need to climb down and move the ladder.
- Always keep three points of contact (meaning two feet and one hand or two hands and one foot) when climbing up or down the ladder.
- Always climb or work facing the ladder.
- Don't use aluminum ladders around electricity.
- Don't place ladders on uneven surfaces.

FOUR KEY LADDER SAFETY POINTS

- ❶ Make sure you use the right ladder for the job. Don't use a step ladder when you need a straight ladder and don't use a chair when you should use a step stool.
- ❷ Work safely when you are on the ladder. Keep your belt buckle between the rails and maintain three points of contact.
- ❸ If your ladder is too short for the job, climb down and get a taller ladder.
- ❹ If you are ever tempted to use a ladder the wrong way, nip it in the bud!