VCSU SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURES:
Ladder Safety

A ladder is to be provided and used at points of access where there is a break in elevation and where there is not ramp, runway, sloped embankment or personnel hoist provided.

Procedure:
Ladders are for climbing and should only be used for that purpose. They are designed for single-person use. Extension, straight and fixed ladders are to be used for gaining access to different elevations, not used as work platforms. No ladder is intended for use in a horizontal position nor are they to be tied together to achieve a greater length. They are not to be used for levering, bracing or any other purpose which might weaken the structure.

- Ladders should be inspected regularly— all defective ladders (weakened, broken or with missing rungs) should be removed and not used by any personnel. Any damaged ladders should be reported to a supervisor immediately.
- Ladders must be strong enough for the intended use. Verify weight capabilities prior to use.
- Ladders must not be tied or fastened together to create longer sections unless they are specifically designed to do so.
- Ladders in storage must be supported, protected from damage and kept out of high-traffic areas.
- Repairs to ladders must meet the original manufacturer's specifications.
- Metal ladders are not to be used near electricity.
- Those using a ladder should face the ladder and use both hands when ascending and descending. It is recommended to hold the ladder with one hand while working to keep your body weight centered between the rails. It is also recommended to use a hanger or tool holder for the tools required for the job.
- When erecting a ladder, the base of a straight ladder should be placed at an angle so that the distance between the bottom of the ladder and the supporting structure is ¼ of the length of the ladder. Both side rails need to rest secure against the support.
- Portable ladders must be firmly placed, held, tied or secured to prevent slipping or falling.
- A ladder is not to be used near a door unless the door is open, locked or guarded. For ladder use in a traffic area, barricades or guards need to be put in place. All access points to the ladder must be kept clear of tools, materials or debris. The top or top step of a step ladder shall not be used as a step. Do not go higher than the 2nd step from the top. Do not climb straight ladders higher than the third step from the top. Keep the end of the ladder at ‘belt buckle’ level.
- The cross bracing on the rear section of the step ladder shall not be used for climbing unless the ladder is designed and provided with steps for climbing on both front and rear sections.
- Stepladders and step stools are designed to be worked from, they are not to be used as straight ladders. They are provided where a minor elevation is needed. They should not exceed 20 feet in height and should be secured or held by another worker if they are greater than 10 feet in height.
- Employees will be trained to recognize hazards in the use of a ladder and to understand the procedures for ladder use. Emphasis will be on the following:
  - Fall hazards in the work area.
  - Correct procedure for erecting, maintaining and disassembling the fall protection systems.
  - Proper construction, use, placement and care in handling ladders.
  - The maximum intended load-carrying capacities of the ladder used.