



INSPECTION OF PORTABLE LADDERS

*Prepared by Chief Executive Office, Risk Management Branch
Loss Control and Prevention Section*

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All ladders should be inspected before each use to ensure they are structurally safe for use. Take ladders that have any defect that would compromise their safety out of service immediately and labeled "**DANGEROUS--DO NOT USE**". Listed below are some of the items that you should use when performing the inspection:

1. All wooden parts should be free from splinters, cracks and decay. Inspect metal ladders for slivers and dents that would compromise the integrity of the ladder.
2. Joints between the steps (rungs) and the side rails should be tight. Rungs should not move when twisted by hand.
3. Securely attach all hardware and fittings.
4. All movable parts should work freely without binding or undue play. Oil if necessary.
5. Replace frayed or badly worn rope.
6. Safety feet should be sound and unbroken.
7. Rungs and steps should be free of grease, oil, or any other substance that would make them slippery. Steam clean wooden ladders having oil or grease on standing or gripping surfaces to remove the substance. Do not use corrosive or alkali materials to remove grease or oil, as these may compromise the integrity of the ladder. Rungs or steps on metal ladders must be corrugated, knurled, or coated with a slip-resistant material.
8. No rungs or steps may be missing.
9. Stepladders should have a metal spreader or locking device of sufficient size and strength to securely hold the front and back sections in an open position.
10. The spreader should not have any sharp objects protruding from it.
11. Do not paint or coat ladders with any material that may cover up obvious deficiencies.

Employees should report defective ladders to his or her supervisor. The supervisor or department head will decide if the ladder is to be replaced or repaired.