

Ladder inspection, maintenance and care

Introduction:

Using a damaged ladder doesn't make sense. You need to inspect ladders before using them. Ladders with defective parts must be removed from service, red-tagged, and reported to your supervisor immediately. Proper care, maintenance and handling of ladders will help ensure your personal safety and reduce wear and tear.

Ladder inspections:

Before using a ladder:

- Make sure to use the right ladder for the task.
- Check the rails for cracks, holes or deformities. If a ladder has a crack or hole, remove it from service.
- Check for missing or broken rivets.
- Make sure all working parts move properly and the connections are secure.
- Carefully check spreaders, extension ladder locks, flippers and the "safety feet."

Maintenance and care:

- Keep ladders free of oil and other slippery materials.
- Lightly lubricate moving parts.
- Tag broken ladders and take them out of service. Only a qualified person can repair ladders. Ladders that cannot be repaired should be destroyed and discarded.

Transporting a Ladder:

- Ask for help when carrying a ladder that is heavy, long or awkward.
- When carrying a long ladder, keep the front end elevated, especially around blind corners, in aisles and through doorways.
- Do not toss or drop ladders into truck or trailers.
- Make sure to secure ladders to truck or trailer and drive slowly over rough terrain to avoid damaging the ladder.

Ladder Storage:

When storing ladders:

- Make sure the ladder is easily accessible and there is adequate room for removal and inspection.
- Never store a ladder where it could fall and hurt someone or become a tripping hazard.
- If stored horizontally, support longer ladders at several points to avoid sagging.
- Always store step ladders vertically.
- Always store fiberglass ladders inside, or out of direct sunlight.
- Store all ladders away from sources of heat, moisture or corrosive materials.

In conclusion:

Ladders are great tools when used properly. Take time to inspect, maintain, transport, use and store ladders safely.