

Inspecting Extension Ladders

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According to NIOSH, each year in the U.S., more than 500,000 people are treated and about 300 people die from ladder-related injuries.

The inspection of an extension ladder is a very important step to avoid serious or even deadly injuries. OSHA requires that employers ensure ladders are inspected on a periodic basis. However, even with periodic inspections it is still part of every worker's job to be sure that the ladder they are about to use is in safe working order.

OSHA Standard 1910.27(f) *All ladders shall be maintained in a safe condition. All ladders shall be inspected regularly, with the intervals between inspections being determined by use and exposure.*

Remember these important safety tips when inspecting extension ladders to help prevent injuries!

- Always visually inspect ladder feet to ensure that foot pads and feet assembly are present and in safe condition. Damaged or missing feet pads can cause you to slip or lose balance and suffer a deadly fall.
- Never attempt to repair a ladder! Do not use wire, screws, bolts, duct tape or electrical tape as a way to fix the ladder; instead tag it and remove it from service.
- Inspect the rungs, rails, lock (dawgs), rope, and pulley assembly of an extension ladder and be sure that all parts work properly.
- It is very important to make certain that the rope and pulley are working and that the ladder locks (dawgs) do not slip!
- Ladder inspections should include making sure that labels are readable and haven't been painted over or damaged.
- Check the rungs and steps for mud, grease, or dirt to avoid potential slip/fall hazards.
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for proper inspection and use of the specific ladder.
- Remove any ladder from service that is found to be defective!

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