Ladder Inspection Checklist
Ladder Safety

Trimming trees, repairing roofs, and changing light bulbs are just a few of the tasks that may require using a ladder. Because ladders are used frequently, it’s easy for employees and volunteers to overlook potential hazards of using them.

Did you know that improper use of ladders is one of the leading causes of falls? Even falls from relatively low heights can cause serious injury or death. Before beginning your next project, follow these five steps to assist you with using ladders safely.
1. Choose the Right Ladder

Selecting the right portable ladder for the job is the most fundamental part of ladder safety. The two types of ladders most frequently used are stepladders and extension ladders. For indoor use, a sturdy stepladder with anti-slip safety shoes/feet is the recommended choice. If you will be working outside, select a taller stepladder or an extension ladder that can be adjusted to the proper working height.

The material used for ladder construction is also important. Although a wooden ladder may seem like a practical choice for small tasks, it comes with its share of problems. When wet, a wooden ladder can conduct electricity and is not safe to use when performing electrical work. In addition, damage and deterioration are not always visible to the naked eye, making a wooden ladder dangerous to use. We recommend that you discard all wooden ladders and replace them with nonconductive fiberglass ladders.

Equally important when selecting a ladder is calculating the maximum working height of your project. When using a stepladder, always stay at least two steps down from the top cap. A ladder is too short if you need to stand on the top step to reach your task. A ladder is too long if the interior ceiling height prevents the ladder from being set up at the proper angle (see “Correct Set Up”). Check the ladder’s manufacturer label for the highest standing point.

Another consideration when selecting a ladder is the duty rating or the maximum safe load capacity. To calculate what rating you need, use a person’s fully clothed weight plus the weight of all tools and materials. This total must be less than the maximum safe load capacity. The duty rating can be found on the ladder’s specification label. We recommend you purchase the highest duty rating you can afford. A Type (I) ladder rated for 250 pounds can be used for most projects and is more versatile than a Type (III) ladder rated for 200 pounds.
2. Inspect the Ladder

Always check the condition of the ladder before use. A damaged or defective ladder should be tagged “Do Not Use” until it can be properly discarded. A supply of tags are included with this checklist. Dispose of a damaged ladder by cutting it apart or taking it to a recycle center.

Grease, dirt, paint and other contaminants on the ladder can cause slips and falls. Clean climbing and gripping surfaces before use if they are slippery.

Check that support braces and bolts are secure. Look for worn or sharp edges. The Ladder Inspection Checklist is a step-by-step guide that you can use to inspect your ladders.
3. Correct Set Up

Setting up the ladder includes moving it to where it’s needed. When carrying a ladder alone, balance the center on your shoulder. Keep the front end elevated about your head and the back end near the ground.

Take extra precaution around corners and through doorways. If the ladder is too difficult for one person to carry, get help to carry it.

Look for an uncluttered, slip-free area to set up the ladder. Remove boxes and other items that create tripping hazards. Place the base of the ladder on a level surface. Never use a stepladder in a folded position. Stepladders should be spread open with the spreader stop latches secured.

When setting up an extension ladder, the base of the ladder should be spaced 1 foot away from the building for every 4 feet it reaches up – or at a 75-degree angle.

When working along the roofline, extension ladders should extend at least 3 feet beyond the roof. The ladder should be tied off to help prevent movement.
4. Climb and Descend Safely

Face the ladder when climbing and descending. Always maintain three points of contact with the ladder. This means using three limbs for reliable support (i.e., two hands and one foot or one hand and two feet). Avoid holding onto the side rails as they do not offer a good way to stop a vertical slip. Instead, use the horizontal rungs or steps.

Move at a steady pace and take one step at a time. Never skip a step or jump off a ladder. Always step carefully to keep your center of gravity between the side rails. Carry small items in a tool belt to keep hands available to climb and descend properly. Use a pulley or a lift to raise large items.
5. Use Safe Practices

Do not over reach when on a ladder and never attempt to move or shift the ladder while it’s in use. Never stand on the top cap or top rung. Only allow one person on a ladder at one time.

Do not place a ladder in front of a closed door that may open out towards the ladder. Lock the door or use a barrier and post signs warning others that a ladder is being used on the other side of the door.

Avoid using a ladder during periods of strong winds or rain as this may result in a loss of balance or cause the ladder to slide, or create slippery steps or rungs.

Store ladders in areas where they will not be exposed to harsh weather conditions or temperature extremes. Excessive heat or corrosive substances could reduce the strength characteristics of a ladder.
# Ladder Inspection Checklist

**Date Inspected:** _____________________________  
**Ladder Location:** _______________________________  
**Inspected by:** _______________________________  
**Ladder Number:** _______________________________

**Type**  
- □ Stepladder  
- □ Extension Ladder

**Height** _________ ft.

**Duty Rating** (Found on the Label)  
- □ Type IAA (Extra Heavy Duty) — 375 pounds  
- □ Type IA (Extra Heavy Duty) — 300 pounds  
- □ Type I (Heavy Duty) — 250 pounds  
- □ Type II (Medium Duty) — 225 pounds  
- □ Type III (Light Duty) — 200 pounds

**Shoes/Feet:** Worn, Loose, Cracked or Missing  
□ Needs Repair □ Good

**Rails/Uprights:** Sharp Edges, Cracked or Bent  
□ Needs Repair □ Good

**Steps/Rungs:** Loose, Broken, Worn or Missing  
□ Needs Repair □ Good

**Top Cap:** Cracked, Loose or Missing  
□ Needs Repair □ Good

**Hardware:** Difficult to Operate  
□ Needs Repair □ Good

**Cleanliness:** Grease, Oil or Slippery Materials  
□ Needs Repair □ Good

**General:** Rust, Corrosion, Cracks, Loose or Missing Parts  
□ Needs Repair □ Good

**Labels:** Missing or Not Legible  
□ Needs Repair □ Good

**Rung Locks:** Loose, Broken or Missing  
□ Needs Repair □ Good

**Rope/Pulley (optional):** Worn, Frayed Broken or Missing  
□ Needs Repair □ Good

Remove the ladder from service if any box is checked under the “Needs Repair” category and tag the ladder as “Damaged – Do Not Use.” Dispose of the damaged ladder properly.

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**Stepladder**

- Label
- Braces
- Rear (No climbing/Standing)
- Spreadsers
- Anti-Slip Safety Shoes/Feet
- Top Cap (No climbing/Standing)
- Front Side Rails
- Step

**Extension Ladder**

- Extending Section
- Base Section
- Rope/Pulley (Optional)
- Side Rail
- Rung
- Rung Locks
- Anti-Slip Safety Shoes/Feet

*Use these illustrations to circle areas of damage*

(Used with permission of Werner Co.)
# Ladder Inspection Checklist

Date Inspected: _____________________________  
Inspected by: _______________________________

Ladder Location: _______________________________  
Ladder Number: _______________________________

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- □ Stepladder  
- □ Extension Ladder

**Height** _______ ft.

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- □ Type IA (Extra Heavy Duty) — 300 pounds  
- □ Type I (Heavy Duty) — 250 pounds  
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- □ Type III (Light Duty) — 200 pounds

**Shoes/Feet:**  
- □ Worn, Loose, Cracked or Missing
- □ Needs Repair
- □ Good

**Rails/Uprights:**  
- □ Sharp Edges, Cracked or Bent
- □ Needs Repair
- □ Good

**Steps/Rungs:**  
- □ Loose, Broken, Worn or Missing
- □ Needs Repair
- □ Good

**Top Cap:**  
- □ Cracked, Loose or Missing
- □ Needs Repair
- □ Good

**Hardware:**  
- □ Difficult to Operate
- □ Needs Repair
- □ Good

**Cleanliness:**  
- □ Grease, Oil or Slippery Materials
- □ Needs Repair
- □ Good

**General:**  
- □ Rust, Corrosion, Cracks, Loose or Missing Parts
- □ Needs Repair
- □ Good

**Labels:**  
- □ Missing or Not Legible
- □ Needs Repair
- □ Good

**Rung Locks:**  
- □ Loose, Broken or Missing
- □ Needs Repair
- □ Good

**Rope/Pulley (optional):**  
- □ Worn, Frayed Broken or Missing
- □ Needs Repair
- □ Good

Remove the ladder from service if any box is checked under the “Needs Repair” category and tag the ladder as “Damaged – Do Not Use.” Dispose of the damaged ladder properly.

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**Stepladder**

- Label
- Braces
- Rear (No climbing/Standing)
- Spreaders
- Anti-Slip Safety Shoes/Feet
- Top Cap (No climbing/Standing)
- Top Step (No climbing/Standing)
- Front Side Rails
- Step

**Extension Ladder**

- Extending Section
- Rope/Pulley (Optional)
- Base Section
- Label
- Rung
- Rung Locks
- Side Rail
- Anti-Slip Safety Shoes/Feet

[(Used with permission of Werner Co.)](https://www.werner.com)
# Ladder Inspection Checklist

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- Step

**Extension Ladder**

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- Rung Locks
- Side Rail
- Anti-Slip Safety Shoes/Feet

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