

# Inspecting Ladders

## Ladders Part 2

Like everything else, ladders have a shelf life; after a couple of years the stress of being climbed up and taken down causes ladders to break down.

Always inspect the condition of the ladder prior to use. If the ladder is damaged, it must be removed from service and discarded. Ladders should also be inspected prior to purchasing.

### What to inspect?

- Working parts
- Bolts
- Rivets
- Step-to-side rail connections
- Anti-slip feet (safety shoes)
- Climbing and gripping surfaces for oil, grease or slippery material (if present, ladder should be cleaned)
- Structural damage
- If side rails are damaged, the ladder must be destroyed

You should inspect ladders every time they are used! If a ladder isn't safe to use, it may not matter how carefully selected, how well set up, or how safely it is used, accidents can still happen.

Read and follow all labels and markings on the ladder. Damaged ladders that cannot be repaired should be destroyed to prevent anyone from getting injured.

An example of a damaged ladder:



Becca Bunker  
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Sources:

Occupational Safety and Health Administration. United States Department of Labor.  
laddersafety.org. American Ladder Institute. 2011.  
Washington State Department of Labor and Industries.