

According to a research study by the National Institutes for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) it was found that ladders are involved in 20 percent of fall injuries among workers and **81 percent of construction worker fall injuries.**

The inspection of a 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.

Follow the safety precautions in this safety topic to help avoid a few of the potential errors that lead to many ladder safety incidents. And remember, always use the ladder as intended and follow all manufacturer's warnings for the specific type of ladder you are going to use!

OSHA Standard 1926.1053(b)(15) *Ladders shall be inspected by a competent person for visible defects on a periodic basis and after any occurrence that could affect their safe use.*



*Individual pointing to the manufacturer's safety labels and warnings on the ladder. Ladder inspections should include making sure that labels are readable and haven't been painted over or damaged. (*1)*

- Always visually inspect ladder feet to ensure that foot pads and feet assembly are present and in safe condition. Damaged or missing foot pads can cause you to slip or lose balance and suffer a deadly fall.



Extension ladder missing foot assembly and foot pads. This appears to be the top portion of an extension ladder that has been taken apart.

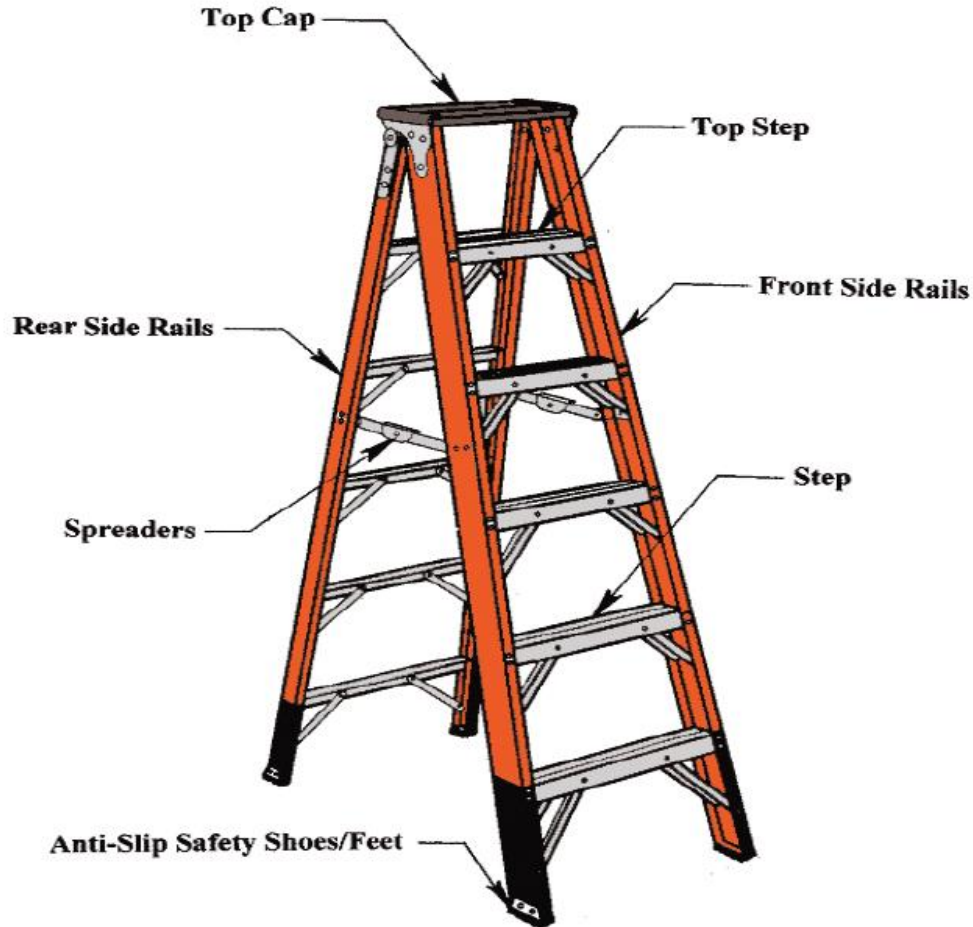


*Damaged footpad/assembly on this step ladder was poorly taped over in a bad attempt to fix the ladder. (*2)*

- 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.

LADDER SAFETY || Inspecting Ladders

Volume 1 Issue 20



OSHA Fact Sheet #3662. (*3)

- Inspect the top cap, all steps, side rails, and locking braces on a step ladder before using.
- Loose locking braces or spreaders can cause the ladder to wobble and become unstable.
- Mud, grease, or dirt on the steps or rungs of a ladder can lead to a slip and fall when climbing up or down the ladder.



Close up view of ladder steps and spreaders. (*4)

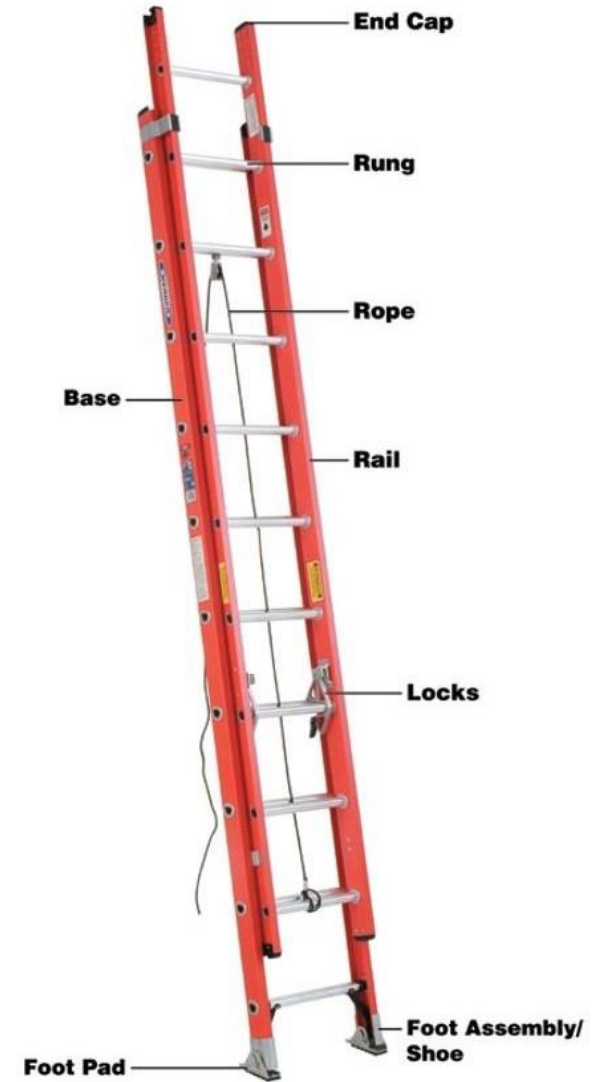
LADDER SAFETY || Inspecting Ladders

Volume 1 Issue 20

- 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!



Close up view of ladder rungs and rope. (*5)



OSHA Fact Sheet #3660 (*6)

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

- Ladder inspections should include making sure that labels are readable and haven't been painted over or damaged.
- Always visually inspect ladder feet to ensure that foot pads and feet assembly are present and in safe condition.
- Never attempt to repair a ladder! Contact the manufacturer or other qualified person to make the repair.
- Inspect the top cap, all steps, side rails, and locking braces on a step ladder before using.
- Inspect the rungs, rails, lock (dawgs), rope, and pulley assembly of an extension ladder and be sure that all parts work properly.
- 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!



*Notice the paint and grime covering the labels and steps of this ladder. It should be removed from service and cleaned to avoid a potential safety hazard. (*7)*

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