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Ladder Inspection Training

Instructor -- Chris Jenkins

Division -- Missoula

Start Date -- 2026-03-24

Expiration Date -- 2031-03-24

Job Name -- RML

Foreman -- John Portrey

Attendance -- John Portrey, Chris Jenkins, Breckin Raszler

Comments:

Falls remain the leading cause of death in construction, and ladder-related incidents continue to be a major contributor to those injuries and fatalities. The good news is that most of these incidents are preventable by following proper ladder safety practices. Long before we ever step onto a ladder, we need to make sure it's safe to use.

Is a Ladder the Right Tool for the Job:

Before choosing to use a ladder, ask yourself if it's really the safest option.

If you need to do any of the following, a ladder may not be the safest choice.

Hold heavy items while on the ladder.

Reach an elevated area requiring a long, unstable ladder.

Work at the height for a long period.

Stand sideways on the ladder to complete the task.

In these situations, consider alternative equipment such as a MEWP, baker's scaffolding, or a podium ladder. Choosing the right equipment for the job significantly reduces fall risk.

Inspect Before Every Use

All ladders must be inspected for defects or damage before each use. Sometimes damage is obvious, and other times it takes a closer look to find something that could compromise the ladder's strength.

As everyone knows, here at Hudson Bay we use our Ladder Inspection Tags to verify the ladder has been inspected and is safe for use.

New Ladder Inspection Stickers

You may have noticed our new ladder inspection stickers on the ladders. These stickers are placed on the inside of the ladder and should be filled out at the start of your shift with the date and your initials after completing your inspection.

We selected these new stickers because they hold up better in inclement weather and last longer in field conditions than the previous white ladder inspection tags, helping ensure inspections remain visible and legible throughout the job.

When filling them out:

Use a **Sharpie or ballpoint pen** for best results.

Do not use gel pens, as the ink tends to smear or fade in wet or cold conditions.

Clear inspection tags help everyone know the ladder has been checked and is ready for use. If your ladder does not have an HBI Ladder Inspection sticker, reach out to your direct supervisor, Jennifer Moreau, or Chris Jenkins to get one.

What To Look for During the Inspection

Take a minute and walk through the ladder from top to bottom : here's what you should be checking for:

Labels & Markings

Rating, manufacturer, and safety warnings must be readable.

If duty rating or warning labels cannot be identified, remove from service.

Side Rails

No soft spots, creasing, or visible stress marks.

Rails should feel rigid with no unusual flexing or twisting.

Steps / Rungs

Steps should feel solid under light pressure - no movements or rotation.

Look for worn anti-slip surfaces.

Top Cap / Platform

Platform should sit flat with no separation from rails.

No drilled holes or added hardware other than manufacturer approved.

Spreader Bars / Hinges

Locks should snap into place without forcing.

Ladder should not close or shift once locked open.

Bracing (Front & Rear)

No missing rivets where braces connect.

Braces should not rattle or move excessively.

Fasteners / Hardware

No loose, missing, or replaced fasteners unless manufacturer approved.

No oversized washers, wire ties, or field fixes.

Feet / Shoes / Pads

Verify ladder feet are present, secure, and that non-skid pads are not excessively worn.

Feet must sit flat on the ground.

Rope & Pulley (Extension Ladders)

Rope should run smoothly without binding.

Pulley should rotate freely without grinding noise.

Rung Locks (Extension Ladders)

Locks must fully seat on the rung with no gap.

Springs should return locks automatically.

General Condition

Ladder should sit level without rocking.

No paint, tape, mastic, or insulation covering defects.

No field modifications or unauthorized attachments.

If You Find Any Deficiencies

Remove the ladder from service immediately.

Tag it out.

Report it to your supervisor or the safety team.

Never try to :make it work: with a damaged ladder. If you're unsure whether a ladder is safe, stop and ask.

Remember This!

A ladder might look simple, but it's still equipment holding your full body weight at height. Taking one extra minute to inspect it can prevent a serious injury or worse.