

## Sample - Fixed and Portable Ladders - Monthly Inspection Checklist

Disclaimer: The specific needs, practices, form of government and other operational procedures of your governmental entity may impact whether this example is appropriate for your use. PennPRIME recommends that you review the final product before using it, and adapt it as necessary.

Date: _____ Inspectors: _____	OK	NOT OK	NA	Corrective Action	Date Done/ Initials
<b>FIXED LADDERS</b>					
Fixed ladders are securely attached to the building structure, and are rigid enough to prevent the ladder from swaying during use.					
Fixed ladders are constructed of sturdy material and can withstand a minimum concentrated load of 200 pounds.					
Rungs on fixed ladders are at least ¾" diameter for metal ladders and 1-1/8" for wood ladders, and are evenly spaced approximately 12" apart.					
Rungs and side rails of fixed ladders are free of protrusions or sharp edges that could catch on employees or their clothing.					
The side rails of fixed ladders extend at least 42 inches (3-1/2 feet) above the surface/platform at the top of the ladder.					
Fixed ladders greater than 20 feet high have a safety cage around the ladder that starts at 7 feet above the ground, and extends unbroken to the top of the ladder.					
Safety railings extending 6 feet to either side of the ladder opening to the top of the ladder along the elevated surface/platform.					
<b>PORTABLE LADDERS</b>					
Portable ladders are selected and available based on the type of activity they are being used for. All portable ladders are Type I or Type II ladders.					
Ladders are in good repair, with no visible damage, sharp edges, protruding splinters, or missing parts. Manufacturer's labels with weight limit and ladder type are on the ladder and legible.					
Employees that could use portable ladders as part of their jobs have been trained on how to select the proper ladder for the job, visually inspect the ladder for damage, and how to properly set up the ladders.					
A designated storage area for portable ladders has been provided and ladders that are not in use are properly stored in this location and secured from falling or damage.					
Portable ladders with damage that is more than just cosmetic have been destroyed or rendered unusable, and disposed of properly.					

## Improve Your Hazard Inspections - Fixed and Portable Ladders

Most facilities use ladders on such a frequent basis that it becomes second nature. Unfortunately, if an employee has not been properly trained on how to select, inspect, set up, use and store the specific types of ladders at the facility, or if the facility has not provided the proper type or size of ladder, employees can be involved in a serious incident.

There are three basic types of ladders commonly found in facilities: fixed vertical ladders, portable extension ladders, and portable A-frame ladders.

Fixed Ladder Applications and Condition - Ideally, a stairway would be available when employees need to regularly access an elevated area. A fixed ladder is a ladder that is permanently attached to a building or structure for use by employees for areas that need regular access, but cannot have a stairway installed due to space limitations.

- Fixed ladders should be constructed of wood or metal, be rigidly and securely attached to the building or structure, and be able to withstand the force of climber and attached equipment (minimum of 200 pounds).
- The rungs of the ladder should be a minimum of 12" long and 3/4" diameter (metal ladders) or 1-1/8" (wood ladders).
- The ladder should have at least 7" of clearance behind ladder and wall surface for foot/toes and hands to be properly inserted onto the rungs.
- The rails of the fixed ladder should run vertically uninterrupted to 3 1/2 feet above the upper surface that is being accessed.
- The top portion of the ladder above the upper surface should not have rungs so the employee can step through the rails onto the surface. The elevated surface being accessed should have standard railings on both sides of the ladder rails to act as fall prevention when the employee is stepping off or onto the ladder.
- The opening of the upper section of the rails should be provided with a gate or chain that will also act as fall prevention while the employee is on the elevated work area.
- Fixed Ladders greater than 20 feet high must have a cage around the ladder that starts at 7 feet above the floor and extends unbroken the entire length of the ladder.
- A fixed fall arrestor cable and harness can be used in lieu of a cage.

Selection of Portable Ladders - All portable ladders should be selected based on the type of work being performed and the location where the ladder will be set up. Straight or extension ladders are used when there is a suitable structure to lean the ladder up against. As with fixed ladders, if an extension ladder will be used to access an elevated surface, the ladder should be able to extend 3 1/2 feet above that surface. An A-frame, or step ladder is used when there is no vertical structure or surface to support the use of the ladder. An A-frame ladder should never be used in the folded position as a substitute for a straight or extension ladder. Only ANSI Type I (IA, IAA) or Type II ladders can be used in the facility.

- Type I ladders are for industrial use, 3 to 20 feet in length, with a maximum load capacity of 250-375 pounds.
- Type II ladders are considered commercial stepladders, 3 to 12 feet, for medium duty or light industrial use, with a maximum load capacity of 225 pounds.
- Type III ladders are for residential use and not permitted in workplaces. A-frame ladders must have a metal spreader or locking device to securely hold the front and back section in the open position.

Storage and Protection from Damage - It is important that ladders be protected from damage by being struck, or from falling. Ladders that are not being used should be stored in a designated location away from chemicals or flames, and should be secured with a chain, rope, straps or other device to prevent the ladders from falling when stored. Ladders with broken or missing rungs, broken or cracked side rails, or other non-cosmetic damage shall be taken out of service immediately and destroyed to prevent them from being used.

#### Setting up Portable Ladders

When using a portable A-frame ladder:

- Make sure the floor or ground that the ladder will be placed on is level and solid enough that the legs of the ladder will not settle or shift when in use.
- The legs of the ladder should be fully extended and the cross member locked in place. If there is not enough space to fully spread the ladder legs, a different ladder should be used.
- Once set up, the ladder should be visually inspected before using it to ensure it is in good repair and set properly.

When setting up a portable extension ladder:

- It is best to use two people: one to steady the ladder in the upright position, and one to raise the ladder extension to the proper height.
- Before raising the ladder, place the feet of the ladder on a level surface approximately where the ladder will be used, then raise it.
- When the ladder is resting on the upper surface where it will be used, check that the angle of the ladder is correct. This can most easily be done by leaning the ladder against the wall or platform, placing your feet on the ground at the bottom of the ladder, and hold your arms straight out. If the palms of your hand are between the rails, then the ladder is at the proper angle.
- If possible, the feet of the ladder should be secured, as should the top of the ladder, to prevent it from moving when in use.

Training on Ladders - Employees that could use ladders as part of their regular job functions need to be trained on how to select the proper ladder for the task, when and how to inspect the ladder for damage, how to properly set up the ladder, how to store the ladder when not in use, and when and how to dispose of damaged ladders. While many employees have experience with using ladders, very few have actually been provided with specific training to ensure they are not putting themselves or others at risk. The training should be provided by a trainer with experience in using ladders, is familiar with specific types of ladders being used, and familiar with the proper selection, setup, inspection and storage requirements. Employee training should be repeated when a new size or style of ladder is purchased, or when an employee has demonstrated that they did not fully understand the content of their original training by misusing a ladder or using one in a risky manner. The training should be documented with an attendance or sign-in sheet that includes the date of the training, the instructor, and the types of ladders covered. The length of training should be based on the number of different ladder types and the employees' experience with the subject material.