

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER  
4801 E. Linwood Boulevard  
Kansas City, Missouri 64128

June 7, 2018

MEDICAL CENTER POLICY 00-001S-000

LADDER SAFETY

1. PURPOSE: To establish policy, responsibilities, and procedures for the safe use and maintenance of ladders
2. POLICY: To minimize potential accidents involving ladders through selection of the proper ladder for the job, correct use of ladders, and maintaining ladders in good working condition.
3. RESPONSIBILITIES:
  - a. Service Chiefs whose employees use portable ladders, including stepladders, are responsible for ensuring that the ladders are inspected, maintained, selected for use, and used in accordance with this memorandum.
  - b. Safety Staff is responsible for conducting spot-check inspections of portable ladders during the annual and semi-annual inspections of the facility to determine if services are conducting effective ladder safety programs.
  - c. Supervisors of employees who use portable ladders will ensure that proper ladders are selected for use and will instruct employees on the safe use and maintenance of ladders.
  - d. Employees who utilize portable ladders are responsible for following safe ladder use and maintenance procedures.
4. PROCEDURES: Portable ladders will be inspected, maintained, selected for use, and used in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements.
5. REFERENCES:
  - a. 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1910.25: Portable Wood Ladders
  - b. 29 CFR 1910.26: Portable Metal Ladders
  - c. 29 CFR 1910.333(c): Selection and Use of Work Practices

6. RESCISION: None

7. RESPONSIBLE SERVICE LINE/COMMITTEE: Safety Service/EOCC

8. CONCURRENCES: Construction Safety Committee

9. REVISION DATE: June 7, 2021

KATHLEEN R. FOGARTY  
Director

ATTACHMENTS:

A – Ladder Inspection Checklist

B – Selection, Use and Maintenance of Ladders

## Ladder Inspection Check List

### Attachment A

| Items to Be Checked   | Condition OK | Repairs Needed | Unsafe; Destroy |
|---|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>General</b>  |              |                |                 |
| 1. Loose steps or rungs (considered loose if they can be moved at all with the hand). |              |                |                 |
| 2. Loose nails, screws, bolts, or other metal parts.                                  |              |                |                 |
| 3. Cracked, split, bent, or broken uprights, braces, steps or rungs.                  |              |                |                 |
| 4. Splinters on uprights, rungs, or steps.  |              |                |                 |
| 5. Damaged, worn, or missing non-slip bases.  |              |                |                 |
| 6. Manufacturer label with load rating is legible and intact.                         |              |                |                 |
| 7. No excessive grease, paint, or coatings.   |              |                |                 |
| 8. No modifications or additions/alterations to the ladder.                           |              |                |                 |
| <b>Step-ladders</b>   |              |                |                 |
| 1. Wobbly (from side strain).   |              |                |                 |
| 2. Loose or bent hinge spreaders.   |              |                |                 |
| 3. Stop broken on hinge spreaders.  |              |                |                 |
| 4. Broken, split, or worn steps.  |              |                |                 |
| 5. Loose hinges.  |              |                |                 |
| <b>Extension</b>  |              |                |                 |
| 1. Loose, broken, or missing extension locks.   |              |                |                 |
| 2. Deterioration of or missing rope.  |              |                |                 |
| 3. Defective locks that do not seat properly when the ladder is extended.             |              |                |                 |
| 4. Footings intact and on stable surface.   |              |                |                 |
| <b>Trestle</b>  |              |                |                 |
| 1. Loose in hinges.   |              |                |                 |
| 2. Wobbly.  |              |                |                 |
| 3. Loose or bent hinge spreaders.   |              |                |                 |
| 4. Stop broken on hinge spreader.   |              |                |                 |
| 5. Center section guide for extension out of alignment.                               |              |                |                 |
| 6. Defective locks for extension.   |              |                |                 |
| <b>Fixed</b>  |              |                |                 |
| 1. Loose, worn, or damaged rungs or side rails.                                       |              |                |                 |
| 2. Damaged or corroded parts of cage.   |              |                |                 |

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| 3. Corroded bolts and rivet heads on inside of metal stacks. |  |  |  |
| 4. Weakened or damaged rungs.                                |  |  |  |
| 5. Damaged or corroded handrails or brackets on platforms.   |  |  |  |
| 6. Base of ladder obstructed.                                |  |  |  |
| <b>Sectional</b>   |  |  |  |
| 1. Worn or loose metal parts.                                |  |  |  |
| 2. Wobbly.   |  |  |  |

## **Attachment B**

### **Selection, Use, and Maintenance of Portable Ladders Selection**

#### **A. Materials**

1. Wood Ladders: All wood parts must be free from sharp edges and splinters and must be free of visual flaws, defects, decay, or other irregularities. Low density wood must not be used.
2. Metal Ladders: The ladder must be without structural defects or accident hazards such as sharp edges, burrs, etc. The metal must be protected against corrosion unless inherently corrosion-resistant. They are only to be used by the painters all other trades will use the fiberglass ladders.

#### **B. Construction Requirements**

1. Steps must be uniformly spaced not more than 12 inches apart. Steps must be parallel and level when the ladder is in position for use. Steps of metal ladders must be corrugated, knurled, dimpled, coated with skid-resistant material, or otherwise treated to minimize the possibility of slipping.
2. The length of a stepladder, as measured by the length of the front rail, must not exceed 20 feet. Stepladders must have a metal spreader or locking device of sufficient size and strength to securely hold the front and back sections in the open position. The spreader must be a component of each stepladder and must have all sharp points covered or removed to protect the user.
3. Metal step ladders must have the bottom of the four rails supplied with insulating non-slip material.
4. Portable rung ladders must be equipped with non-slip bases when there is a hazard of slipping. A ladder is considered to be in hazard of slipping if it is placed on oily, metal, concrete, floor tile, or slippery surfaces. (Non-slip bases are not intended as a substitute for care in safely placing, lashing, or holding a ladder.)
5. The length of a single ladder or individual sections of ladders must not exceed 30 feet. Two-section metal ladders must not exceed 48 feet in length, and over two-section metal ladders must not exceed 60 feet in length. Two-section wood ladders must not exceed 60 feet.

#### **Ladder Use**

1. Place a ladder so that the horizontal distance from the base to the vertical plane of the support is approximately one-fourth the ladder length between supports. (For example, place a 12-foot ladder so that the bottom is 3 feet away from the object against which the top is leaning.)
2. Ladders must be placed to prevent slipping or they must be lashed or held

in position. Provide solid footing on soft ground to prevent the ladder from sinking.

3. Ladders must not be used in a horizontal position as platforms, runways, or scaffolds.
4. Ladders must not be placed in front of doors opening toward the ladder unless the door is blocked, locked, or guarded.
5. Ladders must not be placed on boxes, barrels, vehicles, or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.
6. Ladders with broken or missing steps, rungs, or cleats; broken side rails; or other faulty equipment must not be used. Improvised repairs must not be made.
7. Short ladders must not be spliced together to provide long sections.
8. Tops of ordinary types of stepladders must not be used as steps.
9. No ladder should be used to gain access to a roof unless the top of the ladder extends at least 3 feet above the point of support, at eaves, gutter, or roof line.
10. The bracing on the back legs of stepladders must not be used for climbing.
11. Ladders must only be used as intended.
12. Since metal ladders are electrical conductors, their use is prohibited where they may come into contact with exposed energized parts.
13. When ascending, or descending, the climber must face the ladder.
14. Before climbing a ladder, be sure shoes are not wet, greasy, muddy, or otherwise slippery.
15. When climbing, or standing on a ladder, keep weight centered on the ladder. Do not lean to the side.

### **Ladder Care and Maintenance**

1. Ladders must be maintained in good condition at all times; the joint

between the steps and side rails must be tight, all hardware and fittings securely attached, and the moveable parts must operate freely without binding or undue play.

2. Metal bearings of locks, wheels, pulleys, etc., must be frequently lubricated.
3. Frayed or badly worn rope must be replaced.
4. Safety feet and other auxiliary equipment must be kept in good condition to ensure proper performance.
5. Rungs must be kept free of grease and oil.
6. Wood ladders may be coated with ordinary linseed oil or other commonly used clear, non-conductive wood preservatives. Ladders must not be painted except for identifying information.
7. Each ladder must be marked with the name of the service to which it belongs.
8. Ladders must be stored where they will not be exposed to the weather and where there is good ventilation. They should not be stored near radiators, heaters, steam pipes, or in other places subjected to excessive heat or dampness.
9. Ladders must be inspected quarterly by supervisors and by users, as used. Ladders that have developed defects must be withdrawn from service for repair or destruction and tagged or marked as "Dangerous, Do Not Use."