

1) Introduction

Portable ladders can pose a serious threat to the safety of the user if they are in a poor state of repair or used without due regard to the necessary safety rules. The inspector should therefore undertake a careful physical inspection of each portable leader on the inspection list to satisfy himself/herself that the unit in question complies with the prescribed safety standards.

Portable ladders that do not comply with these standards should be removed from service immediately.

2) References

Working at Heights - Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993

3) Inspection Instructions

LP1- Mounting brackets

Question on checklist: Are all the mounting brackets, etc. Tightened?

Loose mounting brackets may lead to serious injury should they give way while the ladder is being used. Each bracket should be tested for firmness during the inspection.





LP 2- Rungs

Question on checklist: Are the rungs tightened (move by hand)?

For obvious reasons one rung that is loose could be the cause of serious injury to the user of the ladder should it give way. The inspector should test each rung of the ladder by hand for tightness.







This is what a ladder should not look like. The timber of the rungs is badly worn and obviously unsafe. Remember that the rungs of a ladders should be able to safely support the weight of even a heavy worker.



This is what a safe rung looks like. The timber is in good condition and firmly fixed to the frame.

LP 3- Stays and rungs

Question on checklist: Are cracked, broken, split or bent stays/rungs repaired?

The inspector should make sure that all repairs to rungs and stays have been carried out properly and that the ladder is firm and safe. No make-shift arrangements should be tolerated.

This rung was not repaired, it was made even more unsafe! It is kept "firm" by nails which are already badly corroded.



This rung was not repaired, it was made even more unsafe! It is kept "firm" by nails which are already badly corroded.

LP4 - Rope

Question on checklist: Is any deterioration of the rope within safety limits?

The rope should be inspected carefully to make sure that it has not deteriorated to the stage where it may give way when the ladder is used.





LP 5 - Stays/rungs

Question on checklist: Are splinters on stays or rungs repaired?

There should be no splinters on the stays or rungs. Apart from the fact that the hands of the user could be injured, his/her clothes could also be caught, leading to a fall.



PL 6 - Hinges

Question on checklist: Are the loose or defective hinge spreaders/hinges, defective centre guide for extension repaired?

Each of these items should be carefully inspected for defects. The inspector should satisfy himself/herself that all repairs have been carried out properly and that the ladder has been restored to an as-new condition.



LP7 - Mails, screws and bolts

Question on checklist: Are the nails, screws and bolts tight? Use the correct screwdriver and spanner to check all nails, screws and bolts for tightness.



LP8-Wooden ladders

Question on checklist: Are all wooden ladders free of paint? Paint may not only cause slipping, but may hide defects on the ladder.



Question on checklist: Are extension locks fitted and are they effective?

There should be extension locks fitted to extension ladders and the locks should function properly.





LP 10 - Non-slip devices

Question on checklist: Has the ladder been fitted with nonslip devices that are not damaged or worn?

All extension ladders should be fitted with non-slip devices which are not damaged or worn to the extent that they no longer fulfil their function. They play a vital role in keeping the ladder from slipping when in use.



LP 11 - Inspection

Question on checklist: Did the appointed person carry out the inspection?

The person carrying out the inspection must see to it that the report is properly signed and placed on record.

LP 12 - Asset register

Question on checklist: Is all equipment in an asset register with a unique number?

All portable ladders should have a unique number by which they may be identified and be included in the asset register.



LP 13 - Storage

Question on checklist: Is the storage place acceptable?

All portable ladders should be stored in a place where they are not exposed to adverse weather conditions which might lead to undue wear or damage, or constitute a safety hazard.

LP 14 - Stability

Question on checklist: Is the ladder stable?

The overall condition of the ladder should be such that it does not pose a safety hazard because of instability when it is used in an extended position. The best way to ensure that a ladder is stable is to test it personally.





LP 15 - Rope pulley

Question on checklist: Is there an effective rope pulley? The rope pulley should be tested during the inspection to see that it is in proper working condition.



LP 16 - Identification number

Question on checklist: Is there an identification number?Each portable ladder should have an identity number, displayed in a prominent place.





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3.) Are there only undamaged / unworn non-slip devices?	Yes	No
4.) Is the ladder stable when opened for use?	Yes	No
5.) Are all the rungs (steps) tightened and secured (move by hand to tes	t)? Yes	No
6.) Are all the mounting brackets, rivets, etc. Tightened and secure?	Yes	No
7.) Are any splinters on stays or rungs repaired?	Yes	No
8.) Is the storage place acceptable?	Yes	No
9.) Have all portable ladders been inspected by a competent person?	Yes	No
10.) Are all portable ladders on an asset register with a unique number?	Yes	No
11.) Are the nails, screws, bolts, rivets etc. Tightened?	Yes	No
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13.) Do all extension locks work effectively?	Yes	No
14.) Does the rope pulley work effectively?	Yes	No
15.) If there are any deterioration of the rope, is it repaired or replaced?	Yes	No
16.) Are the wooden ladders free from any paint?	Yes	No
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Head Office

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