



SHARP START



June 3 — One More Use

Noticed bottom step of ladder cracked.	Took ladder out of commission and told supervisor
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It's easy to tell ourselves, "It'll be fine for one more job."

One more climb.

One more shift.

One more day until someone has time to replace it.

During a routine observation, an employee noticed the bottom step of a ladder was cracked. The damage could have easily been overlooked, especially if the ladder had been used regularly without issue. Instead of assuming it would hold up for one more use, the employee immediately removed the ladder from service and notified their supervisor.

Ladders are one of the most commonly used tools in the workplace, which can make their hazards easy to underestimate. A damaged step, bent rail, missing foot, or loose component may not seem significant until weight is applied and the ladder fails when it is needed most.

The challenge is that damaged equipment often doesn't fail right away. The ladder may have worked yesterday, last week, or even earlier that same day. That's what makes equipment inspections so important. We don't inspect tools because they have already failed—we inspect them to prevent failure from occurring.

This employee recognized that the condition of the ladder had changed and took action before someone got hurt. A few moments spent inspecting equipment can prevent an injury that lasts much longer.

Hazards

- Fall from elevation
- Loss of balance
- Ladder collapse or failure
- Struck-by injuries from falling objects
- Sprains, fractures, and other fall-related injuries

Words of Wisdom

A damaged tool doesn't become safe simply because it worked the last time it was used. Inspect equipment before use, trust what you see, and remove defective equipment from service immediately.

Pause and Think

- When was the last time you found a defect during a pre-use inspection?
- Are there tools in your area that employees use so often they may stop noticing their condition?
- What signs of ladder damage should employees look for before use?
- How would you respond if you found a damaged tool that someone else was planning to use?
- What could happen if a damaged ladder remains in service?

Closing Thought

The best time to find a defective tool is before someone uses it.