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FAQ's about fire department ground ladder inspections

Which NFPA Specification applies?

NFPA Code 1932 - Standard on use, Maintenance and Service Testing of Fire Department Ground Ladders - 2015 edition.

Why do ground ladders need to be inspected?

Fire Department ladders are built rigidly and are capable of withstanding heavy loads. However, their use under adverse conditions requires that they provide an extra margin of safety. The NFPA provides recommended specifications for testing fire department ground ladders to provide reasonable safety for fire fighters and victims who depend on their performance without failure.

What types of ladders are covered by NFPA 1932?

All in-use fire department ground ladders, regardless of year of manufacture or type of construction, *shall be inspected and service tested* to determine if they meet the standard for continued use.

What certifications or qualifications are required to perform these tests?

NFPA 1932 - 2015 edition, National Fire Protection Association does not approve, inspect or certify any installations, procedures, equipment or materials; nor does it approve or evaluate any testing agencies. The authority having jurisdiction may base acceptance on compliance with NFPA or other appropriate standards when choosing a testing agency.

What is the difference between an inspection and service test?

Ground ladder inspection and maintenance is performed in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations for periodic maintenance. It consists of a visual examination of the ladder and hardware for any signs of excessive wear, cracks, loose parts or fatigue in addition to lubrication requirements.

A *Service-Test* is a series of strength tests which assures the continuing load bearing capacity of the ground ladder.

When do ground ladders need to be service tested?

1. Before being placed in service for the first time.
2. At least annually.
3. Any time a ladder is suspected of being unsafe.
4. After being subjected to overloading.
5. After being subjected to excessive heat.
6. After being subject to impact or unusual conditions of use.
7. After any repairs other than replacing the halyard.

What does a service test consist of?

1. Manufacturers Recommendations.
2. Visual inspection of all ladder hardware including:
 - Shoes, butt spurs, rails, beams, rungs, guides, pawls, pulleys, halyards, fly stops, rollers, roof hooks, fly locks, bolts, rivets, truss blocks, etc...
3. Required Labels:
 - Ladder length, electrical hazard, positioning placard, heat label
4. Strength testing:
 - Horizontal bend, roof hook, extension ladder lock testing and hardness testing.

Where Can I Get More Information?

National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, PO Box 9101 Quincy, MA 02269

International Fire Service Training Association, 930 North Willis, Stillwater OK 74078

American Society for Non-Destructive Testing, 1711 Arlingate Lane, Columbus OH 43228

American Society for Testing and Materials, 100 Barr Harbor Dr., W. Conshohocken PA 19428

American Welding Society, 550 NW LeJune Rd., Miami FL 33126