

Prevent hazards when using supported scaffolding.

Scaffolds are regularly used by contractors when above-ground work is being performed over large areas. According to OSHA, over two million workers, or 65 percent of the construction industry, now perform work on scaffolds.¹ When properly used, they can provide an effective and efficient jobsite resource.

Some common types of supported scaffolds include:

- Frame Scaffold
- Baker Scaffold
- Ladder Jack
- Tube & Coupler
- Mast Climber
- Pump Jack

Scaffolds can present serious dangers if neglected or used by untrained workers. These potential hazards include injury to workers and nearby pedestrians; as well as damage to property, equipment, and materials. Scaffold accidents may also trigger project delays with reconstruction of the collapsed scaffolding and complying with potential OSHA investigations.

Some hazards typically associated with neglect or inadequate training include:

- Unstable ground or surfaces used
- Inadequate inspection practices
- No fall protection
- Improper planking
- Lack of designated access points
- Electrocution

Adequate site evaluation and employee training can help prevent hazards.

Through development of company-specific policies and proper training of workers, the risks associated with scaffold use can be greatly reduced.

When designing a training program, consider the four areas of focus:



PREPARATION

- Assign a competent person who is qualified in scaffolding, to supervise the erection, alterations, moving, and disassembly of the scaffold
 - The competent person should also review the fall protection and equipment needs of employees who erect and dismantle scaffolds
- Formally train all employees on the hazards of the scaffold and how to control them
 - Evaluate each site and discuss hazards observed
 - Ensure adequate clearance distances between the scaffold and overhead electrical lines
 - Develop policies that address when to discontinue using scaffold during hazardous weather (high winds, rain, snow, ice, etc.)

¹*Scaffolding*. Occupational Safety & Health Administration, United States Department of Labor, <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/scaffolding/construction.html>

ASSEMBLY

- Inspect the ground, mud sills, baseplates, and all other supporting components to confirm they meet the manufacturer's specifications
 - Never mix components from different manufacturers
- Verify the scaffold is plumb, braced, and cross braced to prevent tipping
 - Attach scaffold to the structure, when required
- Scaffolding must be able to support at least four times the maximum intended load.
- Work platforms must be adequately planked with no gaps greater than 1"
 - Planks must be of scaffold-grade lumber
 - Walkways and platforms must be at least 18" wide.



Proper Use and Safety

- Verify that all employees are wearing the proper PPE when working under, near, or on the scaffold
- A competent person shall perform inspections before each shift, or after any occurrence that threatens the scaffold's stability
 - Have a system that visually identifies deficiencies and place near all access points that are impacted
- Have accessible ladders and stairways to access the scaffold
 - Cross braces are not to be used for climbing purposes
- Provide adequate guardrails, mid-rails, and toe-boards on all open sides
 - When using mobile scaffolds, lock the wheels while in use

STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE

- Store all unused equipment in a clean and dry area
- Discard any damaged parts that no longer meet the manufacturer's specifications
 - Any parts removed from service must be destroyed to prevent any future unintentional use

Resources:

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/scaffolding/supported/index.html>

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.451>

<https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/alliances/sia/sia.html#!5B>

<https://www.cpwr.com/>

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