

SCAFFOLDS

Definition

A scaffold is a temporary structure, usually made of metal tubing, which provides support for workers and materials used in construction, maintenance, repair and demolition work.

Scaffolds are either fixed or they can be disassembled. Some scaffolds have castors or wheels that give them mobility.

Hazards

The most common hazard associated with scaffolds is that of falling; either the worker may fall from the scaffold or the scaffold may collapse and fall, injuring the worker and others in the area.

Controls

To prevent falling accidents, ensure that the following controls are in place.

Construction

- If the scaffold is made up of separate sections of frames, these must be pinned together to prevent separation
- The frames must have horizontal and vertical bracing to prevent rocking or twisting
- The castors must be pinned to the frame
- There must be a braking device in each castor (*see Figure 1*)
- If the platform is made of planks, the planks must be cleated to prevent slippage
- The platform must have handrails, midrails and toe boards
- Outriggers and/or guy wires must be available for use, where necessary
- The working height of the scaffold must not exceed three times its least lateral dimension (measured at the base) unless it is guyed and stabilized by outriggers



Figure 1 – A rolling scaffold

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- Obtain appropriate capacity equipment for the work. In determining capacity, consider the total weights of individuals/materials to be placed on the scaffolding. The scaffold capacity must be at least twice the total weight applied to it (*See OHSA, Const Reg., Section 126*).
- Ensure scaffolding is erected in accordance with the design drawings and specifications for that equipment, and erection is supervised by a competent worker. Ensure that these design drawings are available on request.
- Inspect the erected scaffold thoroughly prior to use to ensure it has been erected properly in accordance with design drawings and specifications (*see OHSA, Const Reg., Sect 130*).

Precautions

Pre-Use

- Note the condition and solidity of the floor surface so that holes, depressions, or uneven surfaces are taken into account
- Check the bracing before use
- For rolling scaffolding, apply the brakes before a worker mounts the scaffold
- Don't extend the adjusting or jacking screws more than 30cm(12") or as required by manufacturer's instructions
- If necessary, secure the scaffold at vertical intervals to prevent lateral movement
- Protect base area from inadvertent contact with traffic – by securing it with hazard tape or warning signs and or having someone present at the base

Use

- Use the proper means of access to the platform
 - Don't climb on the frame
- Never over reach from the platform – move the scaffold to your desired location
- Never ride on a moving scaffold unless protection from falls is provided (*OHSA, Const Reg., Sect 129(3)*)
- Get help when moving a scaffold
- Be aware of load limits and ratings and stay within them
- Consider the nature of work being done. If it is considered to be construction work (*see OHSA definition*) then work must be conducted in accordance with all requirements of the Construction Regulations, regardless of the fact the work is being conducted in another regulatory setting

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Maintenance

The physical condition of scaffolds is very important for the safety of workers. Establish a regular inspection and maintenance schedule for scaffolds. Inspections should include;

- Structural integrity of bracing and uprights
- Conditions of brakes, castors, outriggers, platform ladders and rails

Since the condition of floors or other surfaces affects the stability of the scaffold, they must be in good repair and level.

Training

Protective equipment such as fall arrest/restraint may be required in some circumstances. Training for this equipment should include hazards, legislative requirements, process for use and the training should require demonstration of competence. Individuals responsible for erection and inspection of scaffolding prior to use must be trained and competent to perform that work.

Training of persons who work on scaffolds is very important. Anyone using a scaffold must be made aware of the above control and work practices. Those working nearby should also be made aware of possible hazards, such as blockage of aisles, tools falling from platform and obstructions of vision.

Legislation

Regulation for Construction Projects (O. Reg 213/91).

- S.128 to 136: Construction and Design

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