OSHA Safety Training
Scaffolds

By definition a scaffold is a temporary, elevated platform that construction workers use for working safely at elevations.

There are three basic types of scaffolds:

Supported scaffolds are comprised of one or more platforms supported by outrigger beams, brackets, poles, legs, uprights, posts, frames, or similar rigid supports.

Suspension scaffolds are comprised of one or more platforms suspended by ropes or other non-rigid means from an overhead structure.

Aerial lifts are vehicle-mounted devices such as cherry pickers or boom trucks used to get a worker to an elevated position.

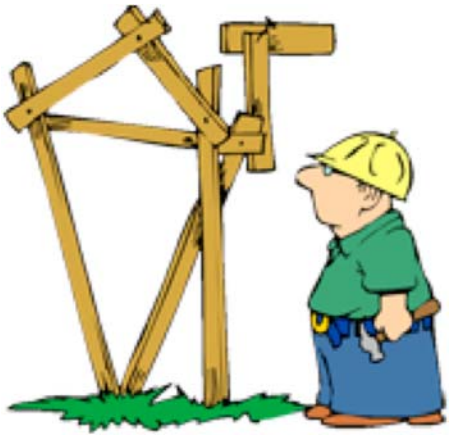
The first step in building a scaffold includes a site inspection to:

- Identify site-specific hazards not identified in the preplanning stage, and
- Ensure that the specific characteristics of the site are considered in the scaffold design

Meanwhile, erectors should ***inspect all scaffold parts before use,*** checking for:

- Cracks
- Dents
- Bends
- Breaks
- Corrosion, and/or
- Bad welds

on all metal pieces.



The employer shall have each employee who performs work while on a scaffold trained by a person qualified in the subject matter to recognize the hazards associated with the type of scaffold being used and to understand the procedures to control or minimize those hazards. The training shall include the following areas, as applicable:

- The nature of any electrical hazards, fall hazards and falling object hazards in the work area;
- The correct procedures for dealing with electrical hazards and for erecting, maintaining, and disassembling the fall protection systems and falling object protection systems being used;
- The proper use of the scaffold, and the proper handling of materials on the scaffold; and
- The maximum intended load and the load-carrying capacities of the scaffolds used.

The employer also needs to train each employee who is involved in erecting, disassembling, moving, operating, repairing, maintaining, or inspecting a scaffold trained by a competent person to recognize any hazards associated with the work in question. The training shall include the following topics, as applicable:

- The nature of scaffold hazards;
- The correct procedures for erecting, disassembling, moving, operating, repairing, inspecting, and maintaining the type of scaffold in question;
- The design criteria, maximum intended load-carrying capacity and intended use of the scaffold; and
- Any other pertinent requirements of this subpart.

Examples of Scaffolding Rules

- Workers will use only the installed ladders for access and will never climb a scaffold using the cross braces or guardrails as ladders
- Scaffolds must never be modified by anyone without permission from the supervisor designated as a “competent person”, including “just removing that brace for a minute to paint behind it....” or doing other seemingly harmless activities
- Any damage to the scaffold has to be reported to the competent person immediately
- Scaffolds cannot be used in high winds or electrical storms; the competent person has the final word on what constitutes these prohibited conditions
- Snow and ice must be cleared from the scaffold before workers attempt to use it

If a worker on a scaffold can fall more than 10 feet, they must be protected by guardrails and/or personal fall arrest systems (PFAS). The type of fall protection required will depend upon the type of scaffold being used.

NIOSH recommends the following measures to prevent serious injuries and fatal falls while working from suspension scaffolds:

1. Comply with the current and proposed OSHA regulations for working with scaffolds.
2. Assure that design and construction of scaffolds conform with OSHA requirements.
3. Shield scaffold suspension ropes and body belt or harness system droplines (lifelines) from hot or corrosive processes, and protect them from sharp edges or abrasion.
4. Inspect all scaffolds, scaffold components, and personal fall protection equipment before each use.
5. Provide personal fall protection equipment and make sure that it is used by all workers on suspension scaffolds.
6. Use structurally sound portions of buildings or other structures to anchor droplines for body belt or harness systems and tiebacks for suspension scaffold support devices. Droplines and tiebacks should be secured to separate anchor points on structural members.
7. Provide proper training for all workers who use any type of suspension scaffold or fall protection equipment.
8. Follow scaffold manufacturers' guidance regarding the assembly, rigging, and use of scaffolds.