

Scaffolding: Structures That Are Built In a Day

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Nothing good comes from a scaffold collapsing. What was an effective work platform; suddenly becomes a landslide of twisting steel and crushing wood. A collapsing scaffold can destroy trucks, equipment, even buildings and is ranked as one of the major causes of death on construction

sites. The five most serious scaffold hazards are: Falls, Unsafe access, Falling objects, Electrocution, and Scaffold collapse. Those five things are a lot to consider when you are just trying to go to work everyday, but the important thing is that you go home that night as well. OSHA does require that anyone working on or even near a scaffold be trained on scaffold safety. It is important that anyone using or working in the vicinity of a scaffold realize the danger that is present. The following are safe work practices for working with scaffolding but realize that these just scratch the surface and there are many more items to consider in order to work safely.

Safety Tips for Scaffolding

- Be sure to have a secure stable base
- Make sure there are no missing pieces (i.e. guardrails, pins, base plates, etc.)

- Inspect scaffold for changes, shifting, and damage at the beginning of each shift and throughout the day
- Be sure employees are accessing the scaffold by approved means (i.e. not climbing on the cross bracing)
- Be aware of dangerous conditions like snow, ice, and high winds



Next time you use or work near a scaffold remember to inspect, especially if you were not involved with the setup. Inspection should be done at the beginning of each shift and the scaffold should be tagged at the point of access. Just like a stop light: green means go, a yellow tag means use caution and get approval from the competent person before accessing the scaffold, and red means stop, under no circumstances should you be on the scaffold. So every time you use a scaffold don't forget to look for the tag, and even if it is a green tag you should still be looking and inspecting because like everything else, things change.

OSHA's Alliance Quarterly Review



The March 2006 edition of the *Alliance Quarterly Review (AQR)* is out! This edition has features on recent Alliance Program successes including training for OSHA staff on masonry best practices coordinated through the OSHA and Masonry Contractors Association of America Alliance. Other

articles of interest: "Safety Fest addresses construction worker safety in the Northwest" and "Case studies show relationship between quality safety programs and good business."

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