



Scaffolding Requirements

The federal government lists scaffolding safety as one of the most commonly cited workplace violations in 2015. Scaffolds provide a safe platform for those working at elevated heights. Improperly built structures or unsafe use, however, can lead to serious injury or even death.

Cal/OSHA standards require scaffolding at heights where ladders are unsafe and there is no permanent structure at least 20 inches wide.

Proper training on scaffold use and what to avoid are important steps to protect your employees who work on scaffolding. Make sure your workers know and follow the regulations, including:

- The correct ladder access to the scaffold.
- The correct method of climbing the ladder (face structure, keep at least 3 points of contact).
- Avoiding shortcuts such as climbing over railings.
- Maximum load and capacity of the scaffold.
- Use of protective nets, tool leashes, and scaffolding toe boards to prevent objects from falling from the scaffolding.
- Using a tie line to control any items being hoisted to the scaffold.

To protect against fall hazards, falling objects, and contact with electrical sources:

- Keep guardrails on all open sides of the structure.
- Install four-inch high toe boards on all railed sides, preventing tools and other items from falling off the structure.
- Lay the planks so that they do not overlap and cause a tripping hazard when working at the corners of a structure.
- Use appropriate flooring planks specially designed for scaffolds.
- Ensure the scaffold is not near any electrical lines.
- Keep materials used on the scaffold away from any electrical lines.

General safe work practices for scaffolding can be used to prevent accidents and injuries:

- Have a qualified person inspect the scaffold daily before using it.
 - OSHA defines this person as someone who through training and/or experience is able to identify "existing and predictable" workplace hazards, and having authority to take immediate corrective action to eliminate them.
- For rolling scaffolds, keep the casters locked at all times when workers climb or work on the scaffold.
- Assembly and disassembly hazards.
- How to control the hazards.

Educate your employees on how to spot defective flooring planks and any other flaws in the scaffolding system. Immediately report any visible hazards. These can make the scaffolding unstable or cause injury or damage. Never alter a scaffold structure or extend it.

Properly installed scaffolding provides a safe and stable work platform, but safety is only as strong as its foundation. Scaffold construction requires strict standards, frequent inspections, and daily maintenance to ensure proper and safe use.

Resources

US Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Cal/OSHA Title 8, CCR Section 1637
Cal/OSHA Title 8, CCR Section 1646