

Scaffolding Basics

An estimated 2.3 million construction workers, or 65 percent of the construction industry, work on scaffolds frequently. Protecting these workers from scaffold-related accidents could prevent 4,500 injuries and 50 deaths every year.

What is a Scaffold?

A scaffold is defined as an elevated temporary work platform. There are three basic types of scaffolds:

- Supported scaffolds, which consist of one or more platforms supported by rigid, load-bearing members, such as poles, legs, frames, outriggers, etc.
- Suspended scaffolds, which are one or more platforms suspended by ropes or other nonrigid, overhead support.
- Other scaffolds, principally manlifts, personnel hoists, etc., which are sometimes thought of as vehicles or machinery, but can be regarded as another type of supported scaffold.

Training Requirements

Erecting/Disassembling- OSHA requires employers to provide training by a competent person to each employee who is involved in erecting and/or disassembling a scaffold. A competent person is defined as one who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards and has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them.

Scaffold Users - Employers are required by OSHA standards to have a qualified person provide training to each employee who performs work while on a scaffold. The training must enable employees to recognize the hazards associated with the type of scaffold being used and to understand the procedures to control or minimize those hazards.



OSHA defines a qualified person as one who possesses a recognized degree, certificate, or professional standing or has extensive knowledge, training, and experience.

Designing and Constructing Scaffolds

Scaffolds must be designed by a qualified person and be constructed and loaded in accordance with that design. A qualified person must do adequate preplanning to assure the safe erection and use of the scaffold.

Adequate preplanning includes:

- Determining the type of scaffold necessary for the job, the maximum load of the scaffold, assuring a good foundation, and avoiding electrical hazards



An engineer is required to design the scaffold when:

- They are to be moved when employees are on them
- Pole scaffolds are over 60 feet in height
- Tube and coupler and fabricated frame scaffolds are over 125 feet in height

References

OSHA standard 1926 Subpart L - Scaffolds

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