SCAFFOLD USER

Scaffolds are temporary structures used to support workers and materials during the construction, maintenance, and repair of buildings and other structures. While they are essential for accessing elevated work areas, scaffolds also present serious safety risks if not properly erected, maintained, and used.

According to OSHA, falls from scaffolds account for a significant number of construction-related fatalities each year. In 2020 alone, there were 52 fatal falls from scaffolding. The good news is that most of these incidents are preventable through proper training, equipment, and adherence to safety standards.

Common Hazards

The most common hazards when working with scaffolds include falls from elevation, scaffold collapse due to overloading or improper assembly, electrocution from overhead power lines and falling tools or materials. In addition to these common hazards, scaffold users should also be aware of the following:

1. Weather Conditions
    a. Wind can destabilize scaffolds or cause materials to fall.
    b. Rain, snow, or ice can make platforms slippery.
    c. Lightning poses a serious risk, especially on metal scaffolds.
2. Improper Assembly or Dismantling
    a. Scaffolds must be erected and dismantled under the supervision of a competent person.
    b. Incorrect bracing or missing components can lead to collapse.
3. Unstable Base or Foundation
    a. Soft or uneven ground can cause scaffolds to shift or tip.
    b. Always use base plates and mud sills as required.
4. Improper Use of Materials
    a. Using damaged or incompatible scaffold components.
    b. Platforms not fully planked
    c. Substituting scaffold planks with non-rated materials.
5. Overhead Work Hazards
    a. Tools or materials dropped from above can injure workers below.
    b. Use toe boards, debris nets, and tool lanyards.
6. Access and Egress Issues
    a. Unsafe climbing practices (e.g., using cross braces).
    b. Lack of proper ladders or stair towers.
7. Electrical Hazards
    a. Scaffolds must maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance from power lines.
    b. Use non-conductive materials when working near electricity.

8. Load Capacity
    a. Using scaffolds as storage platforms.
    b. Exceeding the scaffold's rated load can cause structural failure or collapse.
    c. Unaccounted weight such as tools, equipment and materials.
9. Inadequate Guardrails or Fall Protection
    a. Missing midrails, top rails, or toe boards.
    b. Not using personal fall arrest systems when required.
10. Inspections and Training
    a. Not inspected before each work shift and after any event that could leave hazards undetected.
    b. Inspections done by an unqualified person.
    c. Untrained workers may fail to recognize hazards.

Training

Who Must Be Trained?

- All employees who perform work while on a scaffold.
- All employees involved in erecting, disassembling, moving, operating, repairing, maintaining, or inspecting scaffolds.

What must be covered in Scaffold User Training?

- Nature of electrical, fall, and falling object hazards.
- Safe use of the scaffold.
- Handling of materials on the scaffold.
- Load capacities.

When is retraining required?

- When worksite changes introduce new hazards
- New scaffold types or equipment are used
- An employee demonstrates lack of proficiency or unsafe behavior.

GCSC RESOURCES

SAFETY TRAINING

6:00am – 3:00pm csr@mygcsc.com

Course Code	Course
08SCAFF	Scaffold User
08FALLP	Fall Protection
08FPCP	Fall Protection Competent Person

VISIT WWW.MYGCSC.COM TO REGISTER