

TOOLBOX TALK #40

USE SCAFFOLDING SAFELY

Rounding out the top five on OSHA's Top Ten List of most cited violations last year is scaffolding with 2,285 violations. Violations of this standard are a mainstay on the List year after year.

Use these tips to help your workers safely use scaffolding:



Use proper safety equipment.

Are your employees working on a scaffold more than 10 feet off the ground? If so, they need to use personal fall arrest systems or guardrails. Employees on a single-point or two-point adjustable (suspended scaffolding) must be protected using guardrails and personal fall arrest systems. Also, many scaffold-related injuries involve falling objects or slips. Wear a hardhat and non-slip footwear to prevent serious injuries.

Be aware of load limits.

Scaffolds need to support four times the maximum intended load without failure, according to OSHA regulations.

Build properly.

First, make sure workers are following manufacturer's instructions when constructing the scaffold. Then, they should avoid power lines by leaving at least 10 feet of clearance between electrical hazards and the construction. Next, a competent person must supervise the building, moving and dismantling off scaffolding, as well as inspect it before each shift and when work is done.

Keep the area organized.

Clutter can lead to trips and falls or cause hazards for workers on lower levels, so workers need to keep their tools and equipment organized and put away after they're done using it.

Train all employees.

Workers who use scaffolds should be trained to recognize, control and reduce hazards. Your training should include proper set up, use and handling of materials – taking into account the intended load and type of scaffold used.