Scaffolding safety toolbox talk

29 CFR 1926.451, 1926.454

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

Who checked the scaffold you are about to climb today, and what did they look at?

Why it matters

A scaffold changes every day as it is built, moved, loaded and taken down. One missing plank, a soft base or a rail left off can turn a normal shift into a fall. People working below are at risk too, from tools and material that drop off the platform. A minute of looking before you climb is how we catch these problems.

Key points

1. **A competent person checks it every shift**
   A competent person must inspect the scaffold for visible defects before each work shift and after anything that could affect its structure. That check does not replace your own eyes. Before you climb, look for missing planks, loose pins, missing rails and soft ground under the base. If something looks wrong, stay off and tell your foreman.
   29 CFR 1926.451(f)(3)

2. **Get on and off the right way**
   When the platform is more than 2 feet above or below the point of access, use a ladder, stair tower, ramp, walkway or other proper access. Crossbraces are never a means of access, so do not climb them. Keep your hands free when you climb, and raise tools and material with a hand line or hoist.
   29 CFR 1926.451(e)(1)

3. **Guardrails or fall arrest above 10 feet**
   Each worker on a scaffold more than 10 feet above a lower level must be protected from falling to that lower level. Depending on the type of scaffold, that usually means guardrails, a personal fall arrest system, or both. Never pull a rail to pass material and leave it off. If a rail is missing, stop and get it fixed before you work there.
   29 CFR 1926.451(g)(1)

4. **Solid footing under every leg**
   Scaffold poles, legs, posts, frames and uprights must bear on base plates and mud sills or another adequate firm foundation. Loose bricks, concrete blocks, boxes and buckets are not a foundation. Check that the ground has not gone soft from rain or digging, and that the scaffold stands plumb.
   29 CFR 1926.451(c)(2)

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5 Know the load limit

A scaffold must not be loaded past its maximum intended load or rated capacity, whichever is less. That limit counts people, tools and material together. Do not stockpile block or brick in one bay, and keep platforms clear of debris. If you are not sure what the scaffold can hold, ask the competent person.

29 CFR 1926.451(f)(1)

6 Protect the people below

Workers on a scaffold wear hard hats and must also be protected from falling tools and debris with toeboards, screens, guardrail systems, debris nets, catch platforms or canopies. Barricade the area below when something could fall on people. Use tool lanyards where you can, and never toss material off the platform.

29 CFR 1926.451(h)(1)

Scenario

Picture this: Late yesterday, another crew pulled two planks and a section of guardrail to land some material, and nobody put them back or told anyone. This morning the ladder is blocked by a pallet, so the first worker up climbs the crossbraces instead. At the top, the worker steps toward the open end of the platform, where the planks used to be. What should have happened here, and who should have caught it?

Crew discussion

1. Who is the competent person for our scaffolds, and how do we reach them?
2. What would make you stay off a scaffold today?
3. Are there power lines, high winds or icy planks we need to plan for on this job?
4. How do we keep people below safe while we work overhead?

Bottom line **Look before you climb, use proper access, keep rails and planks in place, and stay off any scaffold that does not look right.**

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Scaffold safety / Seguridad en andamios

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Trainer / Instructor _____ Location / Lugar _____ Company / Empresa _____

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