



Scaffolding Safe Working Practices

To enable the Council to fulfil its legal obligations under the existing Health and Safety legislation it is essential that all scaffolds are erected and used in a safe and proper manner.

1. Scaffolds must only be erected and dismantled by persons who have been trained and authorised to carry out this work.
2. All scaffolds must be inspected weekly and **immediately** after bad weather which is likely to have affected stability.
3. Partly erected scaffolds must have warning notices displayed to inform persons that scaffolds must not be used.
4. All materials used in the erection of scaffolds must be sound and free from defects. If any defects are observed they should be reported without delay.
5. It is essential that all scaffolds are fitted with hand rails and toeboards.
6. Suitable and safe means of access and egress must be provided to all working platforms.
7. Ladders giving access to scaffolds must be tied at the top and extend at least 3ft 6ins (1.1m) above the landing platform.
8. Scaffolds must not be subject to shock loads. Also materials must not be thrown from scaffolds.
9. Portable scaffolds should be moved by applying force to the base. On no account must a portable scaffold be moved with persons on it.
10. The height of a mobile scaffold must not exceed four times the least width.
11. All scaffolds must be erected on a firm base.
12. Do not overload a scaffold.
13. All scaffold platforms must be cleared of rubbish and surplus materials before being dismantled.
14. Scaffolds which are not designed to be independent should be securely tied to the building or structure.

15. All scaffolds must be properly braced in all directions.
16. Scaffold boards should wherever possible be butt jointed. If this is not possible then bevelled pieces should be placed at each end of an overlapped board.
17. Care should be taken to ensure that there are no trapped ends. No overhang should exceed four times the thickness of the board.
18. Excavations must not be dug under or near to scaffolding.
19. Scaffolds erected in public areas must be adequately lit during the hours of darkness.

PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC

When scaffolding operations are in progress the public must be excluded from both the area of work and a sufficient area around it. Steps to ensure this will include:

- Obtaining a temporary pavement or street closure whilst operations are carried out.
- Undertaking operations in “quiet” hours, i.e. early morning, at night or at weekends.
- Incorporating fans, crash decks and “tunnels” as early as possible into a scaffold.
- Erecting barriers and signs and diverting the public away from operations.
- Storing scaffold clips and other loose materials away safely on the scaffold.
- Not raising or lowering materials over members of the public or other site workers.

Also consider that disabled persons need proper access along pavements covered by scaffolding.

SCAFFOLDERS WORKING AT HEIGHT

Scaffolders must follow safe systems of work to prevent people falling. In particular:-

- When lifting or lowering materials, scaffolders must be clipped on or working within a handling platform that is fully boarded, with double guard-rails and toe boards.
- A minimum three board working platform together with a single guard-rail is provided as erection or dismantling works progress.
- Safety harnesses to be worn at all times by scaffolders and fitted with a 1.75m length lanyard and a 55mm opening scaffold hook or similar for one-handed operation;
- Harnesses should be clipped on to a secure anchorage point where falls of 4m or more are possible. A secure anchorage point requires the following minimum conditions:-
 - The scaffold must be tied in to a sound structure as work progresses.

- Attachment can be made to a ledger, transom or guard-rail supported with load bearing couplers or a transom supported by ledgers in a lift above fixed at both ends by single couplers.
- At least one bay of a scaffold should remain boarded-out as work progresses and this should be used for ladder access for the full height of the scaffold.
- Safe ladder access for scaffolders should be incorporated as early as possible into the erection process.
- Scaffolders should not be clambering up and down scaffolds without proper ladder access and safe working platforms provided on each lift being worked on.

STABILITY OF SCAFFOLDS

Each year there are a number of scaffold collapses across the country. To make sure your scaffold does not collapse you should ensure that:-

- The anchors specified to tie a scaffold to a structure are suitable for the base material and that they are installed correctly.
- Scaffold anchors or ties are installed as erection work progresses. Conversely, they should not be removed too early during dismantling operations.
- More ties will be needed on a sheeted or netted scaffold to ensure its stability.
- Scaffolds are not overloaded with equipment, especially tube and fittings, during erection or dismantling operations.

TRAINING, SUPERVISION AND MONITORING

Effective training of scaffolders is possibly the most essential factor in preventing accidents on site. In addition, do not forget the importance of monitoring the scaffolding contractor. Clients, principal contractors and others in control should take reasonable steps to ensure that any work being carried out on their site or premises is undertaken safely. Simple steps to take include:-

- Checking the training levels of scaffolders and who will supervise them on site.
- Site monitoring of scaffolders to ensure they follow proper safety standards.

Further information can be obtained from the health and safety team.