

SAFETY MEETING TOPIC

This form shall be completed and kept on file

Job Name _____ Location _____ Job No. _____
Meeting Leader _____ Title _____
Date Held _____ Place _____ Time _____
Subject of Meeting _____ **SCAFFOLD HAZARDS** _____

While injuries might result from any number of activities associated with scaffold use, the most serious problems usually happen because of exposure to three main hazards; falls, being struck by falling objects and electrical shock. It is important to remember that many of the dangers you are exposed to at ground level may also be present on a scaffold. Even so, a great many injuries and deaths can be prevented by constantly guarding against the top three hazards.

FALLS

The most common reasons for falls from scaffolds are the lack of guardrails, scaffolds being improperly planked, or employees not using scaffolds properly. Plank related accidents occur when unsecured planks become dislodged or spaces on the platform allow a worker to fall through. Working outside of fall protection, or working when conditions are dangerous also lead to falls. Dangerous conditions include high winds and electrical storms. Devastating accidents also occur when scaffolds collapse because they were not constructed properly. You should not attempt to construct a scaffold unless you have been properly trained to do so, and then only under the direct supervision of a competent person.

FALL PROTECTION

Fall protection is required on any scaffold 10' or more above a lower level. Two systems sometimes used by contractors, ladder jacks and pump jacks, require the use of personal fall arrest systems (PFAS) which secure the employee to a lifeline.

A guardrail system will serve as adequate fall protection for the majority of scaffolds used by construction workers. A guardrail system consists of, "**but not limited to**" toprails, midrails and posts. Toprails should be placed between 38 and 45 inches above the platform. Midrails should be approximately halfway between the toprail and the platform. Guardrail systems must extend around all open sides of the scaffold. The side facing the work surface need not have a guardrail if it is less than 14" away from that surface. Any opening on a scaffold platform must be protected by a guardrail system. This would include access openings and platforms which do not extend across the entire width of the scaffold

STRUCK BY FALLING OBJECTS

When you work or pass beneath scaffolds, you are prone to the hazards of falling objects. Equipment and materials may fall to the surface below. When working on the scaffold you may also be struck if there are others above you. Anyone exposed to falling objects must wear appropriate head protection. The use of barriers, screens, mesh, nets and toeboards can help prevent objects from falling on to workers below.

PROTECTION FROM FALLING OBJECTS

Workers exposed to falling objects while on or near a scaffold are required to wear hardhats. In addition to hardhats, at least one other form of protection must also be provided. One way to protect workers from falling objects is to install a screen or mesh on the open sides of the scaffold. These should extend from the top rail to the platform. Other forms of protection include debris nets, catch platforms and canopy structures. Because many of these other methods are impractical for construction work, the use of barricades may be more appropriate. Properly placed, the barricades will prevent other workers from passing beneath the scaffold. In this industry, however, the most common form of falling object protection is a toeboard. These must be installed on all scaffold platforms above 10' and should be a minimum of 3½" in height.

ELECTRIC SHOCK

Electric shock is especially dangerous because most of the scaffolds you will be using are constructed from metal. The problem is escalated by the fact that the structures are rarely grounded. Scaffolds erected without the supervision of a competent person may be placed too close to live electrical wires. When scaffolds must be erected near power lines that can't be moved, protective barriers should be placed on the wires or they should be deenergized. Such actions should not be attempted by unqualified persons.

ELECTRIC SHOCK PROTECTION

When erecting or using a scaffold near powerlines, the following guidelines have to be followed. The minimum approach distance for insulated lines less than 300 volts is 3 feet. For uninsulated lines less than 50 kilovolts (kava), the minimum approach distance is 10 feet. For any lines over 50 kava (insulated or uninsulated), the minimum approach distance is 10 feet plus 4 inches for every 1 kv over 50. These minimum approach distances include the scaffold, you (as far as you can reach), and any conductive materials you may be using.

Scaffolds may be erected closer to powerlines than the distance listed above, but only after contacting the utility company. The scaffold cannot be erected or used until the utility company has deenergized, moved, or covered the lines with protective barriers.

Never attempt to perform any painting operations around electric lines where the hazardous energy has not been controlled.