OSHA® FactSheet

Narrow Frame Scaffolds

Narrow frame scaffolds, also known as Baker/Perry style scaffolds, are among the most popular pieces of construction equipment. Due to their versatility many contractors use them instead of ladders because they allow workers to maintain their balance and work more easily from the platform.

What is a narrow frame scaffold?

A narrow frame scaffold has wheels and is often used as a mobile scaffold with the end frame measuring 3 feet or less in width. (See Fig. 1.) Designed to be easily moved, they are used for operations such as painting, drywall installation, plastering, and other jobs where workers must frequently change position. Scaffolds can be adapted to stairs, ramps, and other uneven surfaces.

In some instances scaffolds may be a better and safer choice than ladders.

Minimizing hazards

Some of the hazards associated with narrow frame scaffolds, ***can*** *lead to personal injury or death; they include*:

- Falls from an elevated level
- Tip-overs
- Electric shocks
- Structural failures (collapse)

Training workers in scaffold safety

Under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act* employers are responsible for providing a safe workplace.

All training must be conducted in a manner and language which the worker is able to understand.

- Only trained and authorized persons should be allowed to use a scaffold. This training must be provided by a qualified person who recognizes the hazards associated with the type of scaffold being used and who understands the procedures to control or minimize those hazards. Training must include how to safely:
  - Use the scaffold and determine the maximum load limits when handling materials.
  - Recognize and avoid scaffolding hazards such as electric shock, falls from heights, and being hit by falling objects.
  - Erect, inspect, move, operate, maintain, and repair scaffolds.

Figure 1

For more information on scaffolding, see OSHA's Safety and Health Topics page at www.osha.gov/SLTC/scaffolding.

Scaffold Safety

Employers must ensure the following:

- Follow the manufacturer's allowable load for the casters, scaffold components and platforms, along with recommended bracing to ensure a rigid and structurally sound scaffold.
- Assess the work area, site conditions, and work to be performed.
- Conduct a pre-operation inspection to verify that all scaffold components are functioning properly and/or are correctly assembled.
- Keep the platform free from tripping hazards such as hand tools, equipment, or materials.
- Lock scaffold wheels with positive wheel and/or wheel and swivel locks to prevent movement while in use.
- Use guardrails which include top rails, mid-rails, and toe boards, or fall protection at working platform heights of 10 feet or higher.
- Stay at least 10 feet away from energized power lines.
- If outriggers are installed, deploy installed outriggers on both sides of the scaffold. All locking pins must be engaged before using the scaffold.

Employers must ensure that workers have been effectively trained in the following:

- Not to stand on the guardrail or use any components of the scaffold or other items (e.g., stepladders, buckets, boxes, barrels, etc.) inside the scaffold to gain additional standing height.
- Not to try to pull yourself from one location to another while standing on the platform.
- Not to use a scaffold if it is incomplete, broken or has missing or ill-fitting parts which need replacement. Contact your employer immediately.
- Not to move the scaffold with worker(s) on the scaffold when:
  - The worker(s) on the scaffold is unaware of the move and/or the surface under the scaffold is not within 3 degrees of level and free of pits, holes or obstructions.
  - The worker is on any part of the scaffold which extends outward beyond the wheels, casters, or other supports.
  - Manual force is not being applied as close to the base as practicable. Manual force must be applied not more than 5 feet above the supporting surface (1926.452(w)(3)).
  - The height to base width ratio of the scaffold during movement is greater than 2 to 1, unless the scaffold is designed and constructed to meet or exceed nationally recognized stability test requirements (such as ANSI/SIA A92.5 and A92.6) (1926.452(w)(6)(ii)).

Retraining

Employers must retrain employees when inadequacies are observed, changes in worksite conditions occur or when it is believed that an employee lacks the skill or understanding needed for safe work involving the erection, use or dismantling of the scaffold.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

For assistance, contact us. We can help. It's confidential.

OSHA® Occupational Safety and Health Administration

www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA (6742)

U.S. Department of Labor

DOC FS-3722 04/2014