

TIP sheet

Scaffolding

T006 – AUGUST 2006



Definition

The erection, alteration or dismantling of temporary structures that are specifically erected to support platforms over four metres fall height.

Minimum requirements

Managers and Supervisors must implement the following measures to control and, or minimise the health and safety risks associated with scaffolding consistent with the OHS Legislation, relevant COP, AS and RTA Contract Specifications (see references):

- Identify, register, assess and then eliminate or control the risks associated with the erection, use and dismantling of scaffolding.
- Scaffolds designed to allow persons to work at 3 metres or more ('high risk construction work'), must be fit for purpose, erected, modified, inspected and dismantled by a certificated and competent person or supervised by the same.
- Scaffolds must be placed on a firm and stable base and have safe means of access/egress to the work platform. E.g. a correctly positioned ladder.
- Scaffolds must not be placed within 6 metres of overhead power lines.
- Fall protection and arrest systems must be used when erecting scaffolding.

- Incomplete scaffolds must be sign posted as 'not for use'.
- Scaffold Hand-over certificates shall be completed and issued before use, where a person or object could fall 3 metres or more. (refer to RTA Form 711). Certificates are available from RTA OHS homepage 'tools and checklists'.
- Scaffolds greater than 3 metres in height once erected in-situ must have a local identifying number issued for maintenance recording purposes and entered on a scaffolding register.
- Where mobile scaffolding is used, wheel locking shall be undertaken when stationary and no person shall be on scaffolding while it is moving.
- Develop written Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) for all tasks involving scaffolding prior to the assembly and use of the scaffolding.
- Train all staff who may work on scaffolding, in the nature of the hazards involved, the means adopted to control exposure and emergency procedures in place.
- overload of scaffold components.
- unstable, incomplete or incorrect use of scaffold.
- base frames not adequately braced or supported.
- scaffold exceeds height to base dimensions ratio.
- inappropriate access or egress points.
- close proximity to electricity.
- slips and falls.
- falling objects.
- manual handling.
- movement of plant and machinery – all cranes and mobile machinery shall keep within designated areas and away from 'exclusion zones'.
Refer to the [TIP Sheet T007](#) – Construction Plant and Equipment.

Hazards

Hazards associated with scaffolding include:

- poor foundation – scaffold shall be erected on a firm and stable base.
- damaged scaffold components.

Risk assessment

A Risk Assessment and SWMS must be completed prior to any person using scaffolding.

The Risk Assessment of tasks involving scaffolding shall comply with the RTA Risk Management Procedure and also include consideration of any potential exposure of other persons and the public by RTA tasks involving working at heights.

Risk controls

The most effective method to control the risk is to eliminate the need to use the scaffolding (e.g. use an EWP). If this is not possible, then reduce (minimise) the risk by working down the following hierarchy of controls (use multiple controls where necessary):

- Select the most secure form of scaffolding or access system.
- Use engineering controls such as edge protection, containment sheeting barriers, toe boards, fencing, tool lanyards, catch platforms and netting, etc.
- Implement administrative controls such as safe work methods (SWMS), and establish 'exclusion zones' to prevent access by unauthorised persons.
- Use fall protection, fall arrest systems and PPE.



Regular inspection

All scaffolding should be inspected in compliance with AS/NZS 1576 and AS/NZS 4576:

- before the first use.
- at intervals not exceeding 30 days.
- as soon as practicable and prior to further use following an occurrence that could have affected the stability or adequacy of the scaffold, such as a severe storm.
- prior to its use, following repairs or,
- when the scaffolding is dismantled and before reuse.

Inspection is recorded on the scaffolding register and indicates whether:

- the scaffold structure and supporting structure is adequate.
- working platforms are secured.
- access and egress is safe.
- the scaffold will enable the relevant work task to be performed safely.



Review

Risk Assessments, SWMS, and work procedures must be reviewed and revised whenever there is a change in the work process, unique local conditions, hazards or following any near miss or injury.

Fall arrest systems

Where a fall arrest system is utilised for work associated with scaffolding, a competent person must install and periodically inspect all fall arrest system components must ensure:

- fall arrest systems comply with the relevant Standards.
- a local register is established to record and schedule inspections of harnesses, lanyard assembly, body belts and any other relevant documentation.
- a suitable rescue procedure is established should a person become suspended by a fall arrest system to avoid risk of 'Suspension Trauma'.

Reporting of incidents

All incidents are to be reported to the OHS Helpdesk on 1300 131 469.

If the incident presents an immediate threat to life or major damage to plant and equipment as advised by the OHS Helpdesk, then:

- the incident must be reported to WorkCover (by the OHS Helpdesk), and
- the incident may be classified a non disturbance occurrence and advice by WorkCover must be obtained prior to touching the affected site.

References

NSW OHS Act 2000 and [OHS Regulation 2001](#) Chapters 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9

[RTA OHS Policy 2.0](#) – Risk Management Policy

RTA QA Specifications G21/G22

OHS Regulation CI 58 – Scaffolding

AS/NZS 1576 – Scaffolding General Requirements,

AS/NZS4576 – Guidelines for scaffolding



Training

There are variable levels of certificates of competency including basic, intermediate and advanced (Ref AS/NZS 4576). A worker appointed to erect scaffolding where a person or object could fall 3 metres should:

- possess basic level scaffolding certificate or higher.
- use PPE such as hi-vis clothing, hearing and eye protection, protective footwear, helmets etc, as prescribed in the risk assessment.
PPE is used only as a temporary measure or as added protection.

Certificate and tags

Scaffold tags must be used and attached to the scaffold. An ID number should correspond to an entry in the site scaffolding register.