SCAFFOLD FALL PROTECTION

When used properly, scaffolds provide a safe platform for workers to accomplish their activities with minimal risk. However, because personnel are working at height it is critically important that scaffolds are set up with the correct safety measures in place to avoid potentially fatal fall incidents.

OSHA requires workers on scaffolds more than 10 feet above a lower level be protected from falling to that lower level.

- Fall protection consists of either personal fall arrest systems or guardrail systems meeting OSHA requirements.
- Workers performing overhand bricklaying operations must be protected from falling from all open sides and ends of the scaffold, except at the side next to the wall being laid.
- All open sides and ends of scaffold platforms must be protected by a guardrail.
- Guardrails must be in place before the scaffold is released for use by workers other than those workers assembling or dismantling the scaffold.

OSHA Standard 1926.451(g)(1) *Each employee on a scaffold more than 10 feet above a lower level shall be protected from falling to that lower level.*

A proper guardrail consists of a top rail, mid rail, and toe board and must meet these strength requirements applied in any downward or horizontal direction:

- Each top rail must withstand a force of at least 200 pounds.
- Mid rails, screens, mesh, intermediate vertical members, solid panels, etc., must withstand a force of at least 150 pounds.
- Toe boards must withstand a force of at least 50 pounds.

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Discussion

What are some common ways workers compromise their safety on scaffolds?

How can weather conditions impact fall risks on scaffolds?