

4. Fall prevention devices

A fall prevention device is any equipment that is designed to prevent a fall for temporary work at heights, and once in place does not require any further adjustment by workers using the device.

4.1 Temporary work platforms

A 'temporary work platform' is a working platform, other than a permanently installed fixed platform, used to provide a working area for the duration of the job. The design of the platform prevents workers from falling. Temporary work platforms include scaffolds, elevating work platforms, mast climbers, workboxes, building maintenance units, portable or mobile fabricated platforms or any other platform that provides a working area and is designed to prevent a fall.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding can be very effective protection in preventing falls; however, there are specific requirements that apply to some types of scaffold under the WHS Regulation.

WHS Regulation 225: A person with management or control of a scaffold must not allow the use of a scaffold from which a person or object could fall more than four metres unless a competent person provides written confirmation that the scaffold has been completed. The person must also ensure that:

- the scaffold and its supporting structure is inspected by a competent person before use, after any incident that could affect its stability (such as a severe storm), after any repairs, and at least every 30 days
- unauthorised access is prevented on scaffolding that is incomplete and left unattended (for example, by attaching danger tags and warning signs at appropriate locations).

The WHS Regulation sets out requirements for erecting and dismantling scaffolding in construction work.

Scaffolding work platforms are generally rated as light, medium or heavy duty. Safety considerations include:

- scaffolding conforms to AS/NZS 4576 *Guidelines for scaffolding* and the AS/NZS 1576 *Scaffolding series*
- all scaffolding is erected, altered and dismantled by competent persons. Any scaffold from which a person or object could fall more than four metres must be erected, altered and dismantled by or under the direct supervision of a licensed scaffolder.
- prefabricated scaffolds are of the same type and not mixed components, unless the mixing of components has been approved by the manufacturer
- safe access to and egress from the scaffold is provided
- edge protection (hand rails, mid-rails and toe boards) is provided at every open edge of a work platform (see Figure 5).

Information, instruction and training for workers using scaffolds

Where work is performed from a scaffold, you must ensure that the relevant workers understand:

- what loads the scaffold can safely take
- not to make any unauthorised alterations to the scaffold (such as removing guard rails, planks, ties, toe boards and braces)
- that working platforms need to be kept clear of debris and obstructions along their length, and
- that incomplete or defective scaffolds must never be accessed.

Where work is performed using mobile scaffolds, workers should be trained to ensure the scaffold:

- remains level and plumb at all times
- is kept well clear of powerlines, open floor edges and penetrations
- is not accessed until the castors are locked to prevent movement
- is never moved while anyone is on it
- is only accessed using internal ladders (see Figure 7).



Figure 6: Perimeter scaffold with a fully decked working platform, guardrails and toeboards.

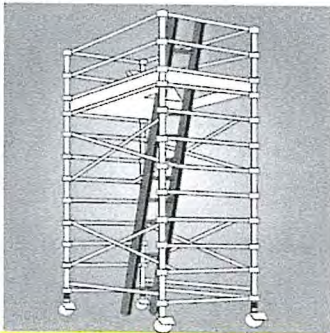


Figure 7: Mobile scaffold with an access ladder and trapdoor to provide the largest possible hazard-free working platform.

Light duty suspended scaffold

A suspended scaffold incorporates a suspended platform that is capable of being raised or lowered when in use (see Figure 8). Common types of suspended scaffolds include:

- swing stages which have cradles supported by a single row of suspension ropes
- double rope scaffolds, with cradles supported by two rows of suspension ropes
- work cages which are small cradles supported by one suspension rope only
- false cars, which are specialised forms of suspended scaffolding and are often used in the construction of lifts before lift cars are installed.

There are specific safety considerations for swing stages, including that:

- the working load and specifications are in accordance with AS 1576.4 *Scaffolding – Part 4: Suspended Scaffolding*
- persons operating light duty suspended stages are trained in safe operation
- persons installing or servicing a light duty suspended stage hold a licence for advanced rigging or advanced scaffolding
- where the swing stage is suspended by two wire ropes to each winch, a safety harness and restraint lanyard is attached to a suitable anchor point of the swing stage.





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