



Mobile Scaffolding in Construction

Scaffolding are generally classified as either suspended scaffold or **supported scaffold**.

Supported scaffolds consist of one or more platforms supported by rigid, load-bearing members, such as poles, legs, frames, outriggers, etc.

Suspended scaffolds are one or more platforms suspended by ropes or other non-rigid, overhead support. This Safety Tips sheet will provide a general overview of supported scaffold safety, and more specifically Mobile Scaffold, sometimes referred to as “Bakers Scaffold”. Mobile Scaffold is a type of supported scaffolding that is set on wheels or castors and are a popular type of scaffold because they are easily moved and mobile, versatile, economical, and easy to use. They are frequently used in one or two tiers by residential contractors, painters, drywall contractors, acoustical ceiling contractors, and others. Scaffold hazards include falls from working platforms and/or walkways, scaffold tip-over, electrical hazards, scaffold collapse or failure, and falling objects or materials from overhead work. OSHA Mobile Scaffolding Standards can be found under [1926.452](#) for the **Construction Industry** and [1910.29](#) for General Industry.

Training:

Employers are required to have each employee who performs work while on a scaffold trained by a person **qualified** in the subject matter to recognize the hazards associated with the type of scaffold being used and to understand the procedures to control or minimize the hazards. For employees involved in erecting, disassembling, moving, operating, repairing, maintaining, or inspecting a scaffold employers must ensure they are trained by a **competent person** to recognize any hazards associated with the work in question. Retraining is required when employees demonstrate a lack of skill or understanding in the scaffold requirements, when job site conditions change which an employee has not been previously trained, and when the type of scaffold or characteristics of scaffold has changed.

Safe Practices:

- Ensure that all scaffold is constructed according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Scaffolds shall be designed by a **qualified person** and shall be constructed and loaded in accordance with that design.
- Scaffolds must be able of supporting without failure at least four times the manufacturer’s recommended maximum load, including materials, workers, and scaffold components.
- Ensure scaffolds are inspected before each shift by a **competent person**, who is capable of identifying scaffold hazards and who has the authority to correct the hazards.
- Supported scaffolds with height to base width (Including outrigger supports, if used) ratio of >4:1 shall be restrained from tipping by guying, tying, bracing, or equivalent means or per manufacturer’s recommendations.
- Fall protection is required when working level is more than 10’ above lower level. This can be either a guardrail system or personal fall arrest system. Guardrails must be installed on all open sides and ends of the platforms. Toe-boards should be used when there is potential for tools, materials, or other objects falling from the platform and contacting workers below.

- Employees erecting or dismantling scaffold must use fall protection as determined by a **competent person**.
- Safe access must be provided for all scaffold systems. Employees are prohibited from climbing the cross bracing or other scaffold components other than those designed to provide safe access. Portable ladders should not be used when leaned against the scaffold as it can cause the scaffold to tip or be unstable.
- Front-end loaders, forklifts, etc. are not to be used for support unless designed for use.
- Keep scaffold at least 10' from electric lines.
- Keep scaffold work platforms free of all excess tools and materials that could create a trip/fall hazard or could fall from platform.
- Each platform on all working levels shall be fully planked or decked between the front uprights and the guardrail supports. Minimum walkway and platform width is 18". Ensure that platforms do not deflect more than 1/60th of span when loaded.
- Mobile scaffold castors and wheels shall be locked with positive wheel and/or wheel and swivel locks, or equivalent means, to prevent movement of the scaffold while the scaffold is used in a stationary manner.
- Caster and wheel stems in scaffold legs or adjustment screws must be pinned or otherwise secured to prevent them from coming out or loose.
- When moving the scaffold manual force to move the scaffold shall be applied as close to the base as practicable, but not more than 5' above the supporting surface or ground level. Scaffold should be stabilized to prevent tipping during movement.
- Power systems used to propel mobile scaffold shall not be used unless designed for that use and the scaffold system is designed for such a propulsion system.
- Screw jacks or equivalent should be used to level the scaffold.

Employees/workers should not be allowed to ride on scaffold unless the following conditions exist:

- The surface on which the scaffold is being moved is within 3 degrees of level, free of pits, holes, and obstructions. Clear all equipment, materials, tools, air hoses, cords, etc. from the path of the scaffolding.
- The scaffold height to base ratio during movement is 2:1 or less.
- Outrigger frames, when used, are installed on both sides of scaffold.
- The propelling force on power systems is applied directly to the wheels, cannot exceed 1'/second, and no employee is on any part of the scaffold which extends outward beyond the wheels, castors, or other support.
- Before the scaffold is moved, each employee on the scaffold shall be made aware of the move before force is applied.

An OSHA "**competent person**" is defined as "one who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them". By way of training and/or experience, a competent person is knowledgeable of applicable standards, is capable of identifying workplace hazards relating to the specific operation, and has the authority to correct them. Some standards add additional specific requirements which must be met by the competent person.

"**Qualified**" person means one who, by possession of a recognized degree, certificate, or professional standing, or who by extensive knowledge, training, and experience, has successfully demonstrated his ability to solve or resolve problems relating to the subject matter, the work, or the project.