

How do we prevent falls from scaffolding?

[Ask the following questions and give time for answers.]

What are the hazards? Falls due to working on scaffolding

What are the results? Broken bones, head injuries, internal damage, death

What should we look for? Unleveled scaffold, improper base, inadequate access, not fully planked, use of baker scaffolds, fall protection, power lines, workers on guard rails.

[Relate this incident or, better, one you know. Ask for lessons learned.]

Actual Incident: On December 22, 2003, a siding installer was putting siding on an apartment building when the pump jack scaffolding on which he was standing failed and he fell 27 feet to his death on an asphalt driveway below.

[Ask the following question and ensure every item is covered.]

How do we prevent these results?

- Scaffolds must be erected, moved, or dismantled under the direct supervision of a competent person.
- Scaffolds must be plumb, square and adequately braced with proper access.
- Scaffolding must be erected on stable foundation.
- The work deck must be fully planked.
- Guardrails must be installed on scaffolding over 10'
- Scaffolds with height to base ratio greater than 4:1 must be restrained from tipping by guying, tying, bracing or equivalent means.
- Baker-type scaffolds require special scrutiny.



2007 accident at the Deutsche Bank, NYC. Photo: New York Times.

[Ask the following questions about scaffolds on this site and ensure every item is covered.]

Let's talk about this site now.

- What items should be checked when scaffolds are used?
Involvement of a competent person, plumb, square, adequately braced, proper access, stable foundations, etc.
- How do you access the scaffolds here?
- Is fall protection available and guardrails in place?
- What do you do if you spot a scaffold fall hazard?



Example of poorly constructed scaffolding. Photo: courtesy of Robert Carr.

Record questions below that you want to ask about this site.]