

What Makes a Platform Safe?

Falls from height can lead to serious injuries. Extra care must be taken to select, install, and inspect materials used as work platforms.

Many times workers are found substituting incorrect materials and installing them in a scaffolding system. This could have many causes ranging from lack of proper material on site, rushing the job, inattention, or lack of training and information.

A number of items must be taken into consideration when selecting working platforms.

Some key points to remember:

- Best practice is to use material designed or manufactured for worker support.
- Inspect scaffold planks and platforms prior to each use.
- Ensure scaffold planks are secured against any movement including uplift.

Measurements

Another common question with planks and platforms relates to width

requirements. The answer to that question is going to differ depending on the use of the scaffold.

Work platforms used on a light duty scaffold can be much different than those used in a rolling tower depending on the situation. It is always best practice to consult the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulations and your company's policies, practices, and procedures for accurate information.

The SCSA's Guide to OHS Legislation mobile app also contains information and regulations that pertains to the use of working platforms used in a scaffolding system.



Legislation

According to section 12-7(1) of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020. An employer or contractor shall ensure that scaffold planks:

- a) are inspected by a competent worker to ensure that the scaffold planks are free of defects before the planks are incorporated in a scaffold;
- b) subject to subsections (2) and (4), are of 38 x 240 millimetre, number 1 structural grade spruce lumber or material of equivalent or greater strength;
- c) are the same thickness as adjoining planks;
- d) are laid tightly side by side with adjoining planks to cover the full width of the platform;
- e) are secured to prevent accidental or inadvertent movement in any direction;
- f) where wooden, do not span more than three metres between vertical supports on a light-duty scaffold or 2.1 metres between vertical supports on a heavy-duty scaffold;
- g) where metal or manufactured laminate, do not have a span between vertical supports greater than the span recommended by the manufacturer; and
- h) do not extend less than 150 millimetres or more than 300 millimetres beyond the bearers.



SCSA Guide to OHS Legislation App



Tool Box Talk

When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks.

Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.

For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf

About the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, nonprofit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.