

Scaffolding Safety

Welded, tubular steel or aluminum frames that are connected by cross braces to form a framework to support planks or decks. It serves as a temporary work platform that supports workers and materials, or both (S.157 OH&S Regulations).

Responsibilities - S.158 NL OHS Regulations

- Employers must ensure that a scaffold is in safe condition;
- A scaffold shall be erected, altered and dismantled by, or under the direct supervision of, qualified workers;
- Must be inspected daily before use and after a modification; and
- Damaged components must not be used.

Requirements - S.160 NL OH&S Regulations

- Must be erected with vertical members plumb and ledgers and bearers level;
- Must be supported by firm and adequately sized foundations or sills;
- Shall be effectively guyed or secured to a structure where the height of the scaffold exceeds 3 times its minimum base; and
- When sheeted, bracing for the scaffold must be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or those of a professional engineer to meet design criteria for induced loads.

Do's

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and specifications;
- Ensure the scaffold is level and resting on a solid surface;
- Ensure all cross braces are secured in place at all levels;
- Maintain a minimum of 5.5m from power lines, without a permit from the power line utility;

- Install guardrails and mid-rails on all open sides. Top rail height shall be between 0.9m - 1.1m;
- Secure all planks, decks, toe boards and guard rails;
- Place planks and decks only on the main ledgers and not on ladder rungs; and
- Ensure there is safe access to all levels.

Don'ts

- Mix components from different manufacturers;
- Level scaffolds using concrete block, bricks or scrap wood;
- Place ladders on scaffolding to gain additional height;
- Use cross-braces as guardrails;
- Force components to fit;
- Climb or stand on cross braces; and
- Use dressed lumber for planks. Planks must be rough sawn and not less than 5.08 cm by 25.40 cm.

Inspection - What to look for

- **Sills:** Not split or rotten
- **Frames:** No cracks in welded joints; no dents in cross-members; legs plumb and square; brace locks in good working order; and no excessive rust.
- **Cross braces:** Must be straight with no bent ends or excessive rust.
- **Scaffold planks:** Not warped; no split ends, saw cuts, notches, or protruding nails.
- **Aluminum and plywood decks:** No cracks, especially in the hooks. Locks work and all bolts and screws in place. No burns or broken ends.
- **Levelling jacks:** No cracks in weld where the levelling jack is attached to the top of the caster. No thread damage. No curling or warping of the base plate and the adjustable nut is a tight fit.