INTRODUCTION

Scaffolds are common on jobsites. These elevated platforms can help employees reach high places for work; however, scaffolds can be dangerous. To help minimize or eliminate exposure to hazards that employees may encounter while working on a scaffold, they must be inspected. This lesson will cover when inspections are required, who can perform them, what needs to be checked during an inspection, and inspection tags.

INSPECTIONS AND WHO CAN PERFORM THEM

Per the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), scaffolds must be inspected by a competent person for visible defects before each shift and after any occurrence which could affect the scaffold's structural integrity.

OSHA defines a competent person as a person 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.

Please note that in the state of California, the erection and dismantling of a scaffold must be done under the supervision of a qualified person. Additionally, suspended scaffolds must be inspected daily by a qualified person and tested as frequently as necessary to provide proper maintenance.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR DURING AN INSPECTION

As mentioned in the previous section, a competent person must inspect a scaffold before each shift and when there has been an occurrence that could have affected the scaffold's structural integrity. So, what does a competent person need to look for during an inspection?

When conducting an inspection, a competent person needs to look for and ensure that the following conditions are met before employees can work on the scaffold:
- All base plates have been placed on appropriate surfaces.
- All screw jacks have been appropriately adjusted.
- Bracing components have been securely attached.
- The scaffold is level and plumb to the working surface.
- The scaffold has been properly placed and secured.
- Any and all ties, anchorages, outriggers, and guy systems meet height to base ratio requirements.
- It has been erected a safe distance away from any powerlines that may be in the area.
- It can support the weight of its load rating.
- All stairs and ladders have been properly secured and are of acceptable width and condition.
- Decking and planks are in good condition and are of adequate performance rating and grade.
- Guardrails and toe boards are in place and they meet the height requirements of OSHA.
- Sills are the correct size and properly installed.
- The scaffold has no visible defects of any kind.

To help record inspections and to note any corrections that need to be made, the competent person may choose or be required to use an inspection form. All inspection forms should be kept in accordance with the company's recordkeeping requirements.

TAGS

OSHA requires accident prevention tags be placed on any existing hazards such as defective equipment and tools. To satisfy this requirement for scaffolds, a competent person should place one of three tags onto the entire scaffold or sections of the scaffold after their inspection. Tags are colored coded in the following manner:

- Green
- Yellow
- Red.

Green tags are indicators that the scaffold has passed inspection and that the competent person has cleared the scaffold for safe use. These tags should be attached to the scaffold at each access point.

Yellow tags are typically used in situations where the scaffold has been modified to meet work requirements and that modifications could present a hazard to employees. These tags should have the following notifications:

- The potential hazard.
- The preventative measures that must be taken prior to use to help minimize the risk, and
- And the name of the of competent person that is authorizing the use of the yellow tag.

Yellow tags should not be removed from the scaffold until the competent person has conducted an inspection that shows that all hazardous conditions have been fixed and that the scaffold is in safe working condition. Based on the results of the inspection, either a red or green tag will replace the yellow tag. Additionally, yellow tags should NOT be used in replacement of a green tag. All efforts should be made to return the scaffold to green tag conditions as soon as possible.

Finally, red tags are an indicator that employees should NOT be on the scaffold due to hazardous conditions. This includes when scaffolds are being erected or dismantled.

At a minimum, red tags should contain the following information:

- The work order or project number
- The date of inspection
- The name of the competent person who completed the inspection
- And a designation of:
  - Under erection
  - Being dismantled
  - Repairs required
  - Overhead protection is required

Re-inspection of the scaffold must take place any time the integrity of the scaffold is in doubt. If employees have concerns about the scaffold, they should speak with the competent person.

Questions? Call 1-800-734-3574

CONCLUSION

To review, before any employees are allowed onto a scaffold, a competent person must complete an inspection of the scaffold before each shift and anytime there is the possibility of the integrity of the scaffold being compromised. Inspection forms should be kept in accordance with all company recordkeeping policies, and the competent person will indicate the condition of the scaffold by using one of three color coded tags. If an employee has any concerns about a scaffold, the competent person should be informed and conduct a re-inspection. Remember, if a scaffold has been tagged red, no employees should be on the scaffold.

Builders' Exchange
OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Safety Meeting Report

Employer _____

Date _____

Location _____

Meeting Supervisor _____

Safety Meeting Subject: _____

Accidents Reviewed: _____
_____

Suggestions: _____
_____

Employee's Attending

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____