



Scaffolding & Fall Protection

Good scaffolds provide safe platforms on which to work. They take a lot of risk out of working at heights, when they are used properly. There are different types of scaffolds, such as rolling scaffolds, swing stage suspended scaffolds, and tube and coupler or pole scaffolds; do you know which kind we use on this jobsite? All scaffolds must be erected and dismantled by a competent person. Always consider fall protection when your work requires you to use scaffolding.

Scaffolding and guardrails go hand in hand. If you're working more than 10 feet off the ground or floor, your scaffold platform must have guardrails that have top rails, mid rails, and toe boards. Occasionally, it may be necessary to remove guardrails—to load or unload materials for example—however, be sure to replace them promptly. Guardrails and toe boards prevent workers on the scaffolding from falling and also provide safety for ground-level employees who might otherwise get hit by falling tools and materials.

If you work on a suspended scaffold, you need to use a fall arrest system as protection against the failure of the scaffold or its components. Your fall arrest system will usually consist of a full body harness, lanyard, rope grab, independent vertical lifeline, and an independent anchorage for the lifeline.

- The full body harness is a system designed to spread the energy of a fall across the shoulders, thighs, and buttocks. A well-designed harness permits prolonged worker suspension after a fall without restricting blood flow; a poorly designed harness can save your life in a fall, but might cause internal injuries while you're waiting to be pulled back up to safety.
- A lanyard connects the safety harness to the rope grab on the lifeline. Lanyards should be made of 5/8" nylon rope or nylon webbing.
- Rope grabs contain a cam device that locks onto a lifeline when there is a hard tug on the lanyard. Make sure that rope grabs are properly connected to lifelines so the cam will work correctly.
- Independent vertical lifelines should be used for each worker on the suspended scaffold. Do not use scaffold suspension lines as lifelines, and do not attach lifelines to any part of the scaffold.
- Anchorage points are independent points on structures where lifelines are securely attached. These points must be able to support a force of at least 5,000 pounds. Remember, your fall protection system is only as good as its anchorage.

Proper fall protection is required for safe scaffold work. Whether you're on the scaffold all day, or just for a minute, always make sure you're protected.



SAFETY REMINDER

Keep lanyards as short as possible to limit fall distance. Rig them so you'll never free fall more than six feet.