

OSHA Training Toolbox Talk: Basic Scaffold Safety – Work Platform Construction

[Reference 1910 Subpart D / 1926 Subpart L]

The whole idea of using a scaffold is to provide workers with a sturdy platform upon which they can stand and safely perform their work. So, it is vitally important to be aware of requirements that apply to the construction of the work platforms on our scaffolds. Federal OSHA requirements include the following:

- Each platform on all working levels of scaffolds shall be fully planked or decked between the front uprights and the guardrail supports. Platform units could include scaffold-grade wooden planks, approved composite or metal fabricated planks, a fabricated deck, or a fabricated platform;
- Each platform unit shall be installed so that the space between adjacent units and the space between the platform and the uprights is no more than 1 inch wide. One exception to this rule is where the Competent Person has determined that a wider space is necessary (for example, to fit around uprights when side brackets are used to extend the width of the platform). In those special cases, the platform shall be planked or decked as fully as possible and the remaining open space between the platform and the uprights shall not exceed 9 ½ inches;
- The front edge of all platforms shall not be more than 14 inches from the face of the work, unless guardrail systems are erected along the front edge, and/or personal fall arrest systems approved by the Competent Person are used to protect employees from falling. There are only two other exceptions to this 14-inch rule:
 - The maximum distance from the face for outrigger scaffolds shall be 3 inches;
 - The maximum distance from the face for plastering and lathing operations shall be 18 inches.
- Each end of a platform shall extend over the centerline of its support at least 6 inches, be maintained in place by cleats, or otherwise restrained by hooks or equivalent means (*see handout*);
- On scaffolds where platforms are overlapped to create a long platform, the overlap shall occur only over supports, and shall not be less than 12 inches unless the platforms are nailed together or otherwise restrained to prevent movement;
- Each end of a platform 10 feet or less in length shall not extend over its support more than 12 inches, unless the platform is designed and installed so that the cantilevered portion of the platform is able to support employees and/or materials without tipping, or has guardrails which block employee access to the cantilevered end. And each platform greater than 10 feet in length shall not extend over its support more than 18 inches, unless it is designed and installed so that the cantilevered portion of the platform is able to support employees without tipping, or has guardrails which block employee access to the cantilevered end;
- On scaffolds where scaffold planks are butted end-to-end to create a long platform, each abutted end shall rest on a separate support surface, except where common support members such as "T" sections are used to support abutting planks, or hook-on platforms designed to rest on common supports are used;
- On scaffolds where platforms are overlapped to create a long platform, the overlap shall occur only over supports, and shall not be less than 12 inches unless the platforms are nailed together or otherwise restrained to prevent movement.

Alert the Competent Person if you notice anything that does not look right. And please make certain to sign your name on the training certification form so you get credit for attending today's training session.

SCAFFOLD PLATFORMS

Each end of the plank must extend over the centerline of its support by at least 6" . . .



. . . or be secured with cleats or some other positive means

Platforms less than 10' long must not extend past its support more than 12" unless secured or guarded



Platforms greater than 10' long must not extend past its support more than 18" unless secured or guarded



Overlapping planks which form a long platform must overlap a minimum of 12", and only over a support, unless nailed or secured



