

Scaffold Safety for Construction: Safety Overview

Handout

Two employees were working on a pump jack scaffold doing roofing work. The scaffold became overloaded and broke. The employees fell 12 feet to the ground, resulting in one fatality and one serious injury.

The majority of scaffold-related accidents are caused by:

- Planks or supports giving way (the most common cause)
- Employees slipping on the scaffold
- Being struck by falling objects

OSHA's construction scaffold regulations at 29 CFR 1926, Subpart L (1926.450-.454), are divided into five sections:

- **Scope and application** — The rule applies to all scaffolds used in construction, alteration, repair (including painting and decorating), and demolition.
- **General requirements** — Requirements for capacity, construction, access, use, fall protection, and falling object protection when working on scaffolds.
- **Additional requirements applicable to specific types of scaffolds** — Pinpoints specific types of scaffolds in use and applies additional requirements for working safely with these scaffolds.
- **Aerial lifts** — Includes safety requirements for extensible boom platforms, aerial ladders, articulating boom platforms, vertical towers, and a combination of any such devices.
- **Training** — Provides specific training requirements for:
 - Employees who work on scaffolds
 - Employees who assemble, disassemble, move, operate, repair, maintain, or inspect scaffolds
 - Retraining

The accident described at the top of this sheet is what the scaffold rule is designed to prevent. The problem is, no rule can require you to be safe all the time. That has to come from a desire to go home from work the same way you came - in one piece and alive.

