

Scaffold Safety for Construction: Access to Scaffolds

Scenario Answer Key

Access to Scaffolds

Getting to the work level of a scaffold has always been a serious problem. This is when most scaffold accidents occur. Workers, when not provided with a proper stairway or ladder, might be tempted to use crossbraces to climb the scaffold. This is strictly forbidden in the scaffold standard.

You must also provide safe access for employees erecting or dismantling supported scaffolds.

It happened like this

Michael was assigned to work on a 20-foot scaffold. When he got to the base of the scaffold, he looked around for a way to get up to the 20-foot level.

After a minute of searching for and not finding a ladder or other means of access, he yelled up to his coworker on the scaffold. "How did you get up there?"

Billy Ray, the coworker, yelled back, "I climbed the crossbraces and then hoisted my tools up in a bucket. Climb up here right away. I need your help."

Michael knew this wasn't safe. He decided to find a ladder to use, and if he couldn't, he'd talk to the supervisor to find out what to do.

What are the issues?

- Safe access to scaffold platform.
- Work practices.

What did Michael do right?

- Didn't climb the scaffold crossbraces like Billy Ray because he wanted to access the platform safely.
- Decided to look for a ladder or other safe means of access.
- Decided if he can't find a ladder, he'll talk to the supervisor about what to do.



What did Billy Ray do wrong?

- Climbed the scaffold crossbraces.
- Encouraged Michael to do the same.

What do you think should happen next?

- Michael must find a safe way to access the scaffold.
- Billy Ray should be given training on proper scaffold access.

Training tips

When a scaffold working platform is more than two feet above or below an access point, the following methods must be used:

- If using portable, hook-on, and attachable ladders, make sure they are positioned so as not to tip the scaffold.
- When using portable, hook-on, and attachable ladders, make sure they are specifically designed for use with the type of scaffold being used.
- If using stairway-type ladders (such as ladder stands), there must be rest platforms at a maximum of 12-foot intervals.
- When using stairway-type ladders (such as ladder stands), they must have slip-resistant treads on all steps and landings.
- If using stairtowers, they must have a stair rail with a toprail and midrail on each side of the stairway.
- When using stairtowers, they must have guardrails provided on the open sides and ends of each landing.
- Safe access must also be provided for employees erecting or dismantling supported scaffolds.

