

Working at Height — Scaffolding Operations

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APPROVED BY
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REFERENCE	ACTIVITY	INITIAL RISK	RESIDUAL RISK
RA13	Erection, alteration, and dismantling of scaffolding structures using tubes, fittings, and system scaffold	HIGH	LOW

1

Pre-work planning and scaffold design

HAZARDS

- Scaffold erected without a design or site-specific risk assessment, leading to structural failure
- Incompetent operatives erecting or altering scaffold beyond their level of training
- Failure to identify buried services, overhead cables, or ground conditions before erecting scaffold

RISK RATING

HIGH → LOW

RESPONSIBLE

Apex Managers, Apex Operatives, Apex Sub-Contractors

PERSONS AT RISK

- Apex Scaffolders
- Other trades working on or near scaffold
- Principal Contractor staff
- Members of the public

CONTROL MEASURES

- A written scaffold design or TG20:21 compliance check must be completed before erection begins; complex structures require a design by a chartered engineer.
- Only operatives holding a current CISRS card at the appropriate grade (Scaffolder or Advanced Scaffolder) may erect, alter, or dismantle scaffold.
- Apex Scaffolding site manager to carry out a pre-start site survey identifying ground conditions, proximity to overhead lines, buried services, and public footfall before work commences.
- A site-specific Method Statement and Risk Assessment must be briefed to all operatives at a toolbox talk before work starts; records to be signed and retained.

- All scaffold to be erected in accordance with NASC guidance (TG20:21 or bespoke design) and PASMA standards where applicable.
- Where scaffold is within 6 m of overhead power lines, the Principal Contractor must confirm isolation or safe clearance distances before work proceeds.

2

Erection, alteration, and dismantling of scaffold

HAZARDS

- Fall of scaffolder from an incomplete or partially erected scaffold structure
- Collapse of partially built scaffold due to inadequate temporary bracing or premature loading
- Scaffold tube or fitting struck dropped onto persons below during erection or dismantling
- Unauthorized access or alteration of scaffold by other trades between Apex Scaffolding visits
- Scaffold erected on unsuitable ground or base plates not used, causing settlement and instability

RISK RATING

HIGH

→

LOW

RESPONSIBLE

Apex Managers, Apex Operatives, Apex Sub-Contractors

PERSONS AT RISK

- Apex Scaffolders
- Other trades on site
- Principal Contractor staff
- Members of the public
- Visitors to site

CONTROL MEASURES

- Full-body harness with a short-lanyard connection to a structural anchor must be worn by scaffolders working on leading-edge or incomplete lifts where collective protection cannot be provided.
- Exclusion zones must be established and maintained directly below all erection and dismantling activities; barriers and warning signs to be in place before work commences.
- Toe boards, brick guards, and debris netting must be fitted to all working platforms as each lift is completed.
- Scaffold must not be loaded with materials or accessed by other trades until it has been formally inspected and a handover certificate issued by a competent Apex Scaffolding supervisor.
- Base plates and sole boards must be used on all standards; ground-bearing capacity to be confirmed before erection; any soft or uneven ground reported to the Principal Contractor immediately.
- Temporary bracing to be installed at each stage of erection in accordance with the design or TG20:21 sequence; no stage to be left unstable overnight.
- All scaffold access points to be locked or removed outside working hours to prevent unauthorised access; signage to indicate scaffold status (working/not for use).
- Tube and fittings to be passed hand-to-hand or hoisted via a gin wheel and rope; throwing or dropping of any material is strictly prohibited.

3

Working platforms and edge protection

HAZARDS

- Fall of operative through an unboarded gap or missing board on a working platform
- Platform boards dislodged or not properly secured, causing operative to lose footing
- Scaffold not inspected at required intervals, allowing defects to go undetected

RISK RATING

HIGH → **LOW**

RESPONSIBLE

Apex Managers, Apex Operatives, Apex Sub-Contractors

PERSONS AT RISK

- Apex Scaffolders
- Other trades using the scaffold
- Principal Contractor staff
- Members of the public

CONTROL MEASURES

- All working platforms must be fully boarded with no gaps greater than 25 mm; boards to be lapped, cleated, or otherwise secured against displacement.
- Guard rails must be fitted at a minimum height of 950 mm, with an intermediate rail at no more than 470 mm from the top rail, and toe boards of at least 150 mm on all open edges.
- Scaffold must be inspected by a competent person before first use, after any modification, after any event likely to affect stability, and at intervals not exceeding seven days; records to be kept on a WS Form 1269 or equivalent.
- Any defect identified during inspection must be tagged 'Scaffold Not for Use' and reported immediately to the Apex Scaffolding supervisor; the scaffold must not be used until repairs are completed and a re-inspection signed off.
- Working platforms to be kept clear of loose materials, tools, and debris at all times; a clear walkway of at least 600 mm to be maintained.

4

Manual handling of scaffold tubes, fittings, and boards

HAZARDS

- Musculoskeletal injury from repetitive lifting and carrying of heavy scaffold tubes and boards
- Crush or impact injury to hands and feet from dropped or mishandled tubes and fittings

RISK RATING

HIGH → **LOW**

RESPONSIBLE

Apex Managers, Apex Operatives, Apex Sub-Contractors

PERSONS AT RISK

- Apex Scaffolders
- Banksmen and labourers

- Other trades in the vicinity

CONTROL MEASURES

- Scaffold tubes and boards to be carried by two operatives where the length or weight exceeds comfortable single-person handling; mechanical aids (forklifts, hoists, gin wheels) to be used wherever practicable.
- All operatives to have received manual handling training; correct lifting technique to be reinforced at toolbox talks.
- Safety boots with steel toecaps and midsole protection, and rigger gloves, to be worn during all manual handling of scaffold components.
- Scaffold materials to be stockpiled in designated laydown areas with clear pedestrian routes; stacks not to exceed safe heights specified in the site logistics plan.

5

Loading out scaffold with materials for other trades

HAZARDS

- Scaffold overloaded beyond its design capacity, causing structural failure
- Materials stored on scaffold becoming dislodged and falling onto persons below

RISK RATING

HIGH

→

LOW

RESPONSIBLE

Apex Managers, Apex Operatives, Apex Sub-Contractors

PERSONS AT RISK

- Apex Scaffolders
- Other trades using the scaffold
- Principal Contractor staff
- Members of the public

CONTROL MEASURES

- Maximum imposed load for each scaffold lift must be clearly stated on the handover certificate and displayed on a scaffold loading notice attached to the structure.
- Loads to be distributed evenly across the platform; concentrated point loads are prohibited unless specifically designed for.
- Brick guards or debris netting to be fitted to all loaded bays before materials are placed; toe boards to remain in position at all times.
- Operatives loading scaffold must be briefed on the maximum load limit; the Principal Contractor is responsible for ensuring other trades do not exceed it.

Working at height in adverse weather conditions

6

HAZARDS

- Operative falls from scaffold platform due to slippery boards in wet or icy conditions
- Scaffold damaged or destabilised by high winds, posing structural risk

RISK RATING

HIGH

→

LOW

RESPONSIBLE

Apex Managers, Apex Operatives, Apex Sub-Contractors

PERSONS AT RISK

- Apex Scaffolders
- Other trades using the scaffold
- Members of the public
- Principal Contractor staff

CONTROL MEASURES

- Work at height must be suspended when wind speeds reach or are forecast to reach Beaufort Force 6 (approximately 22 mph / 10 m/s); the Apex Scaffolding supervisor makes the stop-work decision.
- Scaffold boards and access ladders to be checked for ice, frost, or standing water before any operative ascends; anti-slip strips to be fitted to ladder rungs and boards where icing is a risk.
- After any severe weather event (high winds, heavy snow, or storm), the scaffold must be re-inspected by a competent person before further use.
- Sheeted scaffolds must be designed to account for wind loading; sheeting to be checked for integrity and secure fixings after adverse weather.

7

Scaffold access and egress

HAZARDS

- Operative falls from a ladder while ascending or descending the scaffold
- Ladder or staircase tower not secured or of inadequate height, causing instability

RISK RATING

HIGH

→

LOW

RESPONSIBLE

Apex Managers, Apex Operatives, Apex Sub-Contractors

PERSONS AT RISK

- Apex Scaffolders
- Other trades using the scaffold
- Principal Contractor staff
- Visitors to site

CONTROL MEASURES

- Internal ladder access bays to be incorporated into the scaffold design wherever practicable; ladders to extend at least 1 m above the landing point and be secured at the top and footed at the base.
- Three points of contact to be maintained at all times when ascending or descending; tools and materials to be hoisted separately using a gin wheel and rope — not carried while climbing.
- Ladders to be inspected before each use; any ladder with missing, cracked, or deformed rungs must be taken out of service and removed from site.
- No operative to use the scaffold structure itself (tubes, transoms) as a means of access; only designated access bays to be used.

OTHER CONTROL MEASURES RELEVANT TO ALL HAZARDS

Hard hats, safety boots (steel toecap and midsole), hi-vis vests, and rigger gloves to be worn at all times on site. Full-body harnesses to be inspected before each use; any defective PPE removed from service immediately.