

TT091 - Scaffold Safety

January 2025

A considerable part of our work at Fletcher Living involves working from scaffold structures. These scaffolds serve the crucial purpose of providing safe access for contractors to their work areas and acting as a protective barrier along the edges. It's imperative that we guarantee the suitability of our scaffold structures to ensure the safety of everyone working at heights.

Introduction:

Welcome, team! Today, let's delve into a crucial aspect of our work – scaffolding safety. Scaffolds are like the backbone of our operations, providing access and support for our tasks at various heights. However, they can also pose risks if not set up and used correctly. So, let's ensure we're equipped with the knowledge and precautions to work safely and efficiently.

1. INSPECT BEFORE USE

Before stepping onto any scaffold, check that the scaffold tag is present and that it was checked within the last 7 days. Look for any signs of damage, instability, or missing components. Never assume it's safe; always verify.

2. WEIGHT LIMITS

Know the weight capacity of the scaffold. Overloading can lead to collapses or instability. Factor in the weight of workers, tools, and materials before proceeding. As a minimum, our scaffold is rated for medium duty (450kg) but can also be rated for heavy duty (675kg). Any loading bays should have their weight limit displayed on signage.



3. GUARDRAILS AND FALL PROTECTION

Guardrails are your best friend when working at heights. Ensure they're properly installed along all open sides and ends. At Fletcher Living, we install a third guardrail affectionately known as the Jonny rail to ensure we keep our scaffold users safe.

4. PLATFORMS

A cluttered scaffold is an incident waiting to happen. Keep walkways clear of debris, tools, and materials. Proper housekeeping can prevent trips, slips, and falls. Systems must allow 450mm of clear access past any stacked material or obstruction. Gaps in the work platform should not exceed 50mm.

5. WEATHER AWARENESS

Be mindful of weather conditions, especially wind. High winds can destabilize scaffolds, posing a significant risk. Never work on a scaffold during adverse weather conditions. Check in with the site team before accessing scaffold after a severe weather event.





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6. PLANNING

With proper planning, you'll be able to give site managers ample notice to coordinate with scaffolders for any necessary changes to the scaffolding. Never make these changes yourself – remember, our lifesaving rule is: "We never alter scaffold or fall protection."

7. COMMUNICATION AND EXCLUSION ZONES

Effective communication is vital, especially when working on scaffolds. Let the contractors around you know if you plan to undertake any hazardous work. Set up exclusion zones around the areas below where overhead work is taking place.

8. NO SHORTCUTS

Don't compromise safety for convenience. Always use the designated access points when moving between work areas, e.g., from scaffold to roof or when moving from the midfloor to ground floor. There should never be a reason for anyone to climb over or through the scaffold guardrails. Avoid passing materials or tools through the rails.

9. REPORT CONCERNS

If you notice any issues with the scaffold, whether it's instability, damage, or other contractors not using it correctly or altering it, report it immediately to the site manager. Addressing problems promptly can prevent accidents down the line.

Conclusion:

As we wrap up, remember that scaffold safety is everyone's responsibility. By adhering to proper procedures, staying vigilant, and looking out for one another, we can ensure a safe and productive work environment. Let's commit to implementing these safety measures in our daily operations to protect ourselves and our colleagues. Thank you for your attention, and let's keep building safely!

Where to find more information about scaffold safety:

Scaffolding in New Zealand – Good Practice Guidelines, WorkSafe (November 2016).



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I have read / heard and understand the information in this Toolbox Talk, I will ask my manager or a Fletcher Living Site Manager if I have any questions.

Name	Company	Date	Signature
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