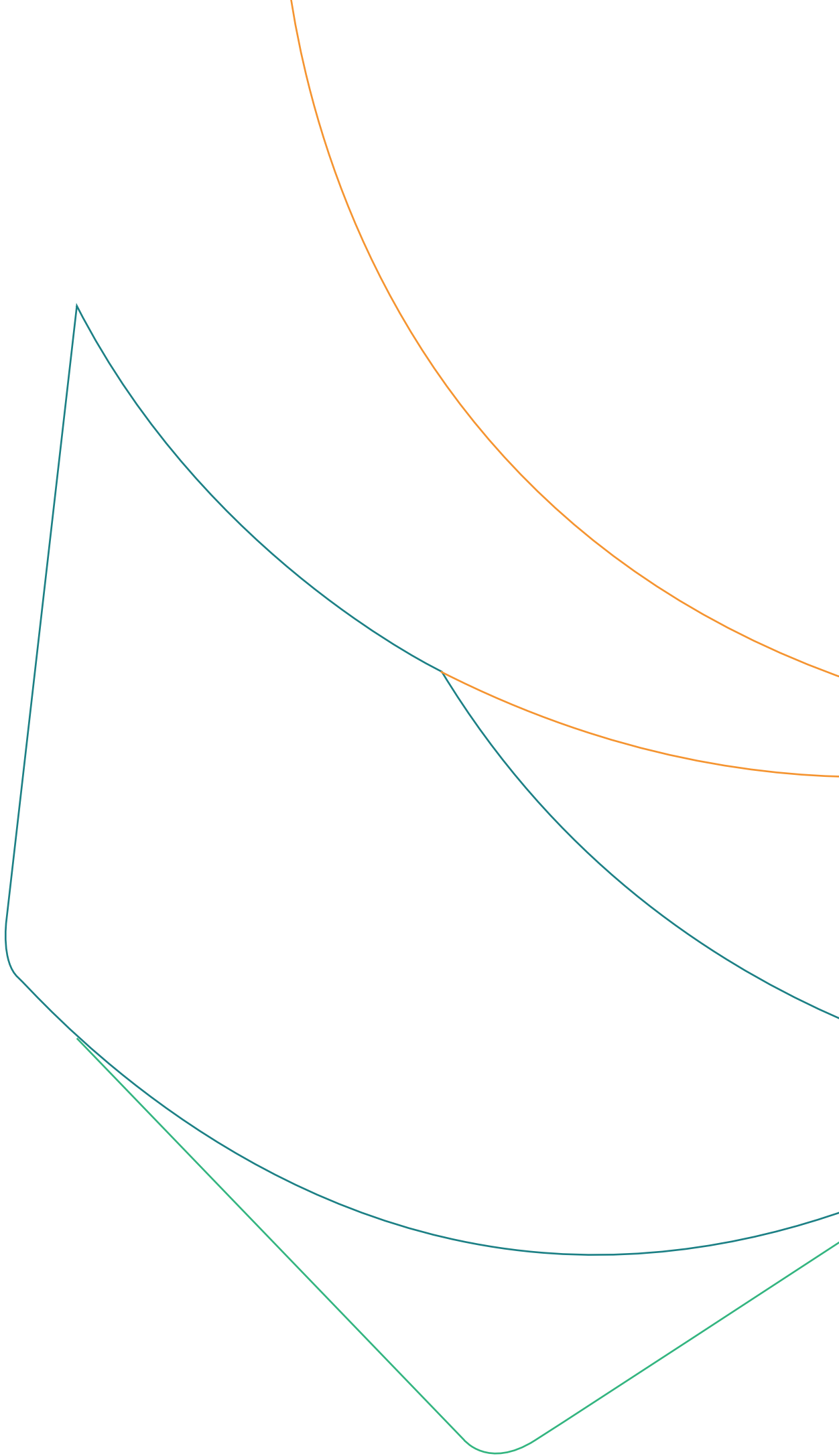




National Council for
Occupational Safety & Health

Guidance Manual on the Use of Scaffolding

November 2025



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Introduction

Scaffolding is one of the essential means used in construction, maintenance, and operational activities in industrial and field work sites, as it allows workers to access elevated areas safely and efficiently.

Despite its importance, the unsafe use of scaffolding is one of the most common causes of accidents in workplaces—whether due to poor installation, neglecting inspections, or failing to follow personal protective measures—which may lead to serious injuries or fatalities.

This guidance manual aims to outline the key controls, standards, and procedures that must be followed when using scaffolding to prevent the risks associated with it.



What Is a Scaffold?

A scaffold is a temporary elevated platform structure supported by uprights on a level surface, enabling workers to perform required tasks at heights exceeding 1.8 meters (6 feet) above ground level.

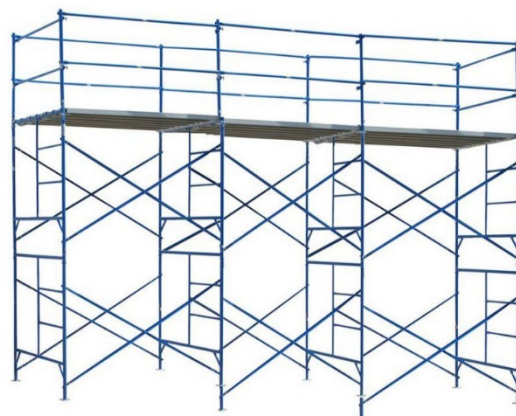
Types of Scaffolds:

There are several types of scaffolds used in the workplace, and each type is selected based on the specific field and the tasks required. Among the most common types are:

Modular Scaffold:

This type of scaffold is distinguished by its ease of assembly and does not require a specialist for installation. It is strong, easy to handle, and allows for safer movement and transition across its platforms. To avoid its associated hazards, the following guidelines should be followed as a minimum:

1. Follow the manufacturer's instructions during assembly and dismantling.
2. Ensure that when erecting the scaffold, a standing platform is provided and that the full length is properly decked.
3. Its design must match the required structural model, or it must be supported with tube-and-coupler components to ensure full system stability if no specific design is available according to required specifications.
4. Top rails, mid-rails, and toe boards must be provided to protect workers and equipment from falling.
5. Do not mix scaffold components or use parts from another scaffold type unless explicitly permitted by the manufacturer's instructions.
6. Ensure that for every ten vertical meters, each part of the scaffold is supported with a tie at an angle close to 45 degrees.
7. Do not use it as a support or anchorage point for suspended scaffolds, and vice versa.



Mobile Scaffold:

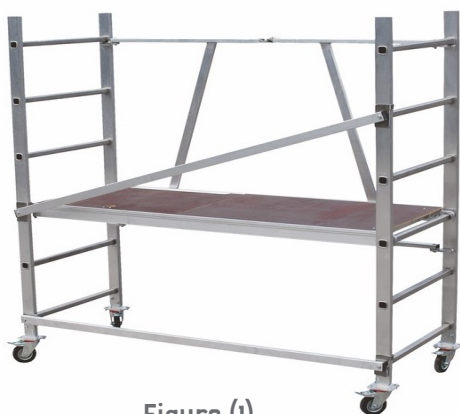


Figure (1)

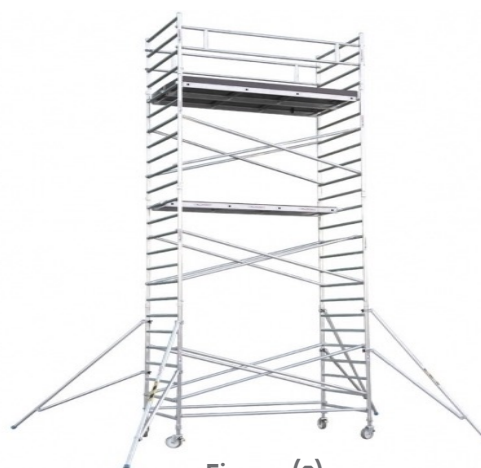


Figure (2)

This scaffold has wheels at its base and is equipped with a movement-locking mechanism to make it safer and more stable. This type of scaffold is commonly used for painting, maintenance, or electrical installation work due to its ease of movement from one place to another. To avoid its associated hazards, the following guidelines must be followed as a minimum:

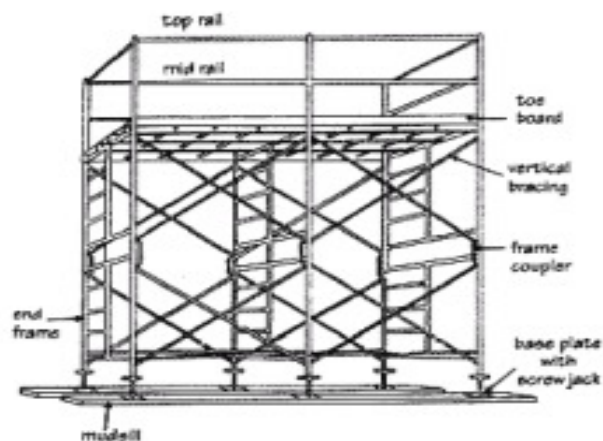


1. Follow the manufacturer's instructions during assembly and dismantling.
2. The scaffold must be assembled and erected by qualified technicians and on a level surface.
3. Ensure that the scaffold is designed to support at least four times the intended load.
4. Move it by pushing or pulling, and only on a level surface.
5. Ensure that the scaffold wheels are locked before starting work and kept locked at all times unless it needs to be moved.
6. Ensure that no workers, tools, or materials are on the platform before or during movement.
7. If the height of the scaffold exceeds four times the base width, horizontal outriggers must be installed to expand the base and enhance stability, as shown in Figure (2).
8. Ensure the presence of a top guardrail at a height of 1 meter and a mid-rail between the platform and the top rail.

Frame Scaffold (Structural Scaffold):

This scaffold consists of steel posts and frames and is characterized by easy and quick assembly, provided that the surface beneath it is completely level and free of any obstacles or barriers. To avoid its hazards, the following guidelines must be followed as a minimum:

1. Follow the manufacturer's instructions during assembly and dismantling.
2. Ensure that all components are inspected by a qualified scaffolding specialist before use.
3. Ensure periodic inspection and maintenance of the scaffold before each use by a competent person.
4. Verify that its bases are fixed on a solid surface.
5. The scaffold must include a ladder for ascending and descending, securely attached to the structure.
6. Ensure that all scaffold components and accessories are stored in suitable conditions that protect them from weather effects and prevent damage.



Main Hazards of Working on Scaffolds:

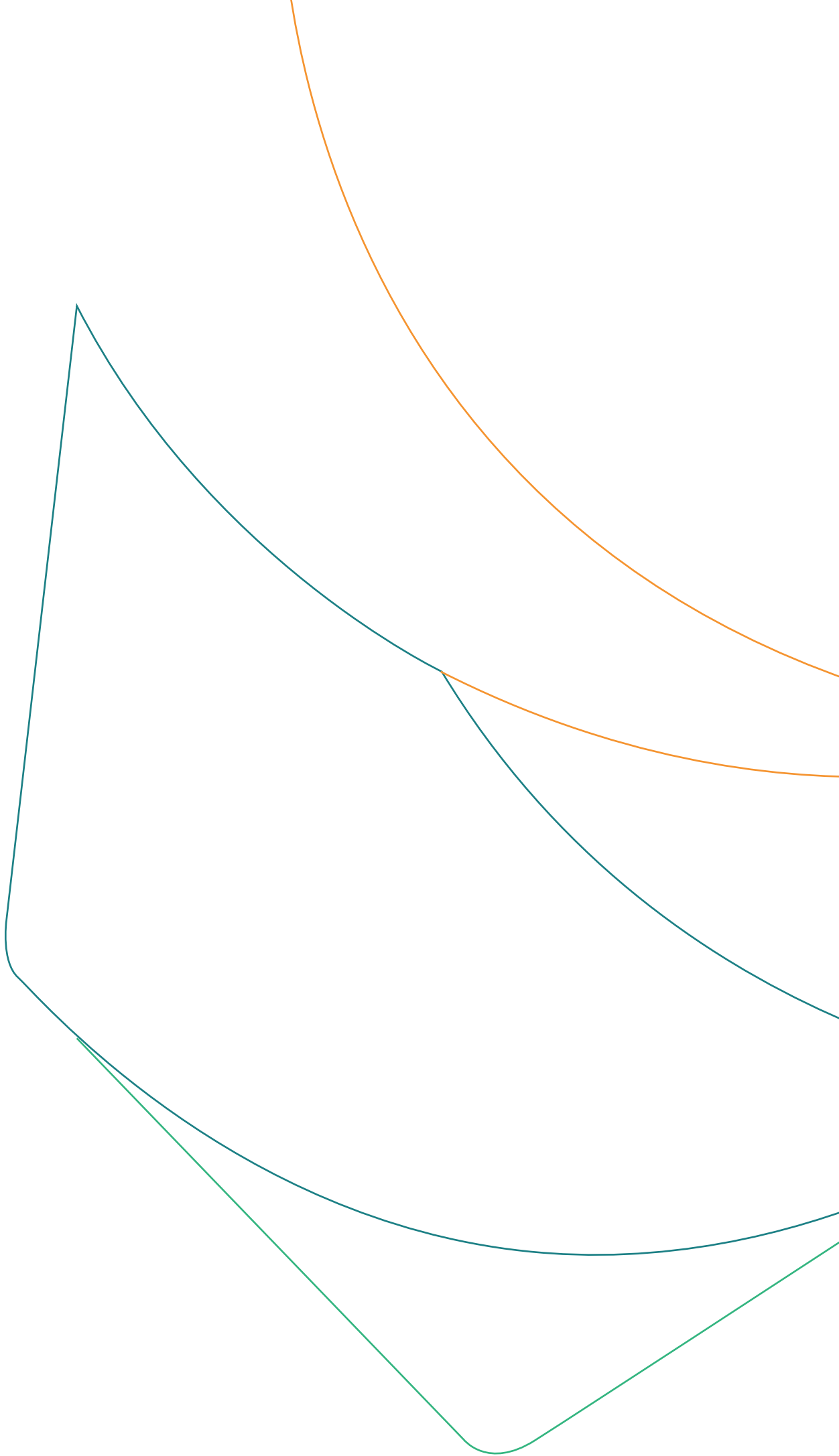
Scaffolds involve three primary hazards:

1. Workers falling from height.
2. Tools or materials falling onto persons below.
3. Scaffold collapse.

Key Preventive Measures for Working on Scaffolds:

1. Conduct daily inspections before the start of each workday by a competent person.
2. Ensure the availability of fall protection equipment for workers and train them on its proper use.
3. Verify that fall protection equipment is inspected before use and is free from damage or defects.
4. Ensure the area around and beneath the scaffold is secured and free of workers.
5. Ensure the scaffold is at least 10 feet away from any electrical lines carrying 300 volts or more within the work area.
6. Establish an emergency rescue plan in case an accident occurs, God forbid.
7. Follow and comply with all safety procedures implemented by the safety officer at the worksite.







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