

Scaffold Alterations: Before a Part Is Moved

Todd Jerome Jenkins | v1.0 | October 12, 2026 | Discussion + field verification

Why this matters

A tie, brace or platform can obstruct the next trade. Removing it may change the scaffold beyond the spot where work is happening.

Objective: Route scaffold changes through authorized alteration and release.

Key hazards or failure points

Removed ties; missing braces; moved decking; changed loads; altered access; stale status tag.

Practical controls

- Tell the scaffold competent person about the conflict before moving any part. Keep affected users off the area identified for restriction.
- Use the required design review, competent-person direction and selected trained, experienced workers for alterations. Users must not improvise changes.
- Plan protection during alteration and the handback to users. Communicate revised access, loading and restrictions before release.

Verify It in the Field

From safe access, identify the exact scaffold and proposed change. Compare the request with the current design and intended task.

Confirm who directs the alteration and who is selected to perform it. Resolve uncertain stability or configuration through the required qualified designer.

Before access resumes, obtain the competent person's inspection and release information for the changed condition. A pre-alteration tag does not establish readiness.

Stop and reassess

Hold access for an unauthorized change, missing part, uncertain design or incomplete inspection. Report the condition; do not climb onto the affected scaffold to repair it.

Ask the crew

1. What part conflicts with the next task?
2. Who may change this scaffold?
3. What must users know before returning?

Use this HOP tool — Pre-job briefing: On the plan, identify the component that conflicts with today's task. Rehearse who requests the change, who controls access and who returns the scaffold to users. Stop the discussion at any unassigned handoff and resolve it before a part is touched.

Sources: OSHA 1926.451, 1926.454; DOE Vol. 2, pp. 34–37. HOP concepts adapted from DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Vol. 2 (June 2009). No claim to original U.S. Government work; no government endorsement implied.

Free next step: JHA/JSA planning and field-verification worksheet

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/scaffold-alterations