

Scaffolds: Verify Readiness Before Access

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Why this matters

A scaffold can change after its last inspection. Added materials, removed parts or disturbed ground can change protection. Verify today's structure and task before access.

Objective: Confirm current inspection, permitted use and safe access.

Key hazards or failure points

Unstable support; damaged or missing components; overload; unsafe access; inadequate fall protection; falling objects; unauthorized alterations.

Practical controls

- Use the scaffold designed for the work, with the required competent-person oversight and trained workers. Know whether you are a user or part of the erection/dismantling crew.
- Keep the intended configuration and load limits. Do not add makeshift height, remove parts or alter the scaffold to reach work.
- Provide access, fall protection and falling-object controls appropriate to the scaffold type and task. Keep people below protected.

Verify It in the Field

Identify the scaffold and competent person. Confirm inspection before this shift and after events that could affect integrity. A tag alone does not prove present condition.

From a safe location, compare the visible structure with the approved setup. Report changed support, damage, missing platforms or altered access. Have the competent person resolve discrepancies before use.

Confirm the actual people/material load, access route and required protection. Do not climb cross braces or enter an incomplete platform to inspect it. Record inspection reference, conditions and restrictions.

Stop and reassess

Hold access for missing inspection, damage, movement, altered components, overload or unresolved protection. Weather and changing conditions require reassessment. Only the designated trained people may correct or alter the scaffold before reinspection and release.

Ask the crew

1. Who inspected this scaffold for today's use?
2. What change would invalidate our readiness decision?
3. Which access route and protection apply to our task?

User readiness briefing; not scaffold design or erector training.

Sources: OSHA 1926.451 and 1926.454; scaffold design and instructions.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/scaffold-pre-use-readiness