

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH DIVISION  
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

Standards Notice - 24

TO: All OSHA Consultants, Supervisors, Safety Officers, Industrial Hygienists, and Staff

SUBJECT: Scaffolding 29 CFR 1926.451

a. Standard

29 CFR 1926.451 states the requirements for scaffolding in construction.

b. Discussion

As a result of recent requests to clarify the application of parts of the above referenced standard, the following guidelines should be used. As in all cases the determination of compliance or noncompliance depends on the conditions the Safety Officer observed at the time of his inspection.

c. Interpretation

29 CFR 1926.451(a) (2) Concrete block is not always an "unstable object" when used as a base of scaffolding. The circumstances and techniques under which it is used must be considered to determine its stability.

29 CFR 1926.461 (a) (3)

A brace is defined in 29 CFR 1926.452 (b) (3) as a tie that holds one scaffold member in a fixed position with respect to another member. The fact that a scaffold member has a place for a brace does not necessarily require that the brace be in place, if it interferes with the erection or stocking of the scaffold. This is only true if the scaffolding is capable of supporting the four times the maximum intended load and meets the other applicable requirements of 29 CFR 1926.451. Also, the manufacturer's design specifications, particularly with respect to the lateral stresses involved are an important aspect which must be considered in the decision to remove pieces of bracing.

29 CFR 1926.451(a) (7) and (a) (8)

A scaffold plank is considered a component of the scaffolding. As such, it must be capable of supporting four times the maximum intended load without failure (a safety factor of four). The fact that a plank might have a split in one end does not automatically mean that it must be removed from service provided it does not otherwise create a hazard to the employees.

29 CFR 1926.451(d) (4)

The standard requires scaffold legs to be placed on a foundation that is adequate to support four times the intended load of the scaffold. The standard does not require that base plates always be employed, but only when conditions necessitate their use. For example, the scaffold legs cannot be placed on a mud foundation without a base to prevent the legs from sinking into the mud.

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Filing Date: 7/15/76

Number: 7e.1004