

If your company is a painting contractor or a mason or bricklayer, chances are that from time to time you must build scaffolding to perform your work. Using scaffolding can sometimes be so routine to the job, that employees take the process of building it for granted. But scaffolding is a safety tool and there are steps that should not be cut when setting up your scaffolding at a job site. This article will take a moment to visit these items as a refresher and to help you keep your painters and masonry workers safe while working on and around scaffolding.

Many workers compensation claims arise out of improper use or improper set up of scaffolding. The main causes of injuries and death on scaffolds are poor planning for assembling and dismantling as well as collapse due to missing tie-ins or bracing or due to loads that are too heavy, slippery conditions or being too close to electrical hazards and overhead lines.

Fall protection should be incorporated into any scaffolds which place the worker at a height of more than 10 feet above a lower level. Top rails should be installed at about 42 inches in height. Mid-rails should be installed approximately halfway between the top rail and the platform surface. When cross bracing is used, the X should fall between 20 and 30 inches above the work platform. Screens of mesh can be used in place of the mid-rail as long as they extend from the top rail all the way down to the working level. Also, if your scaffolding is rising to a height of more than 125 feet, then it must be designed by a registered professional engineer.

Scaffolds also should function to provide some protection to workers below from falling tools or debris. Each scaffold should have toe boards installed. The toe boards should be at least 4 inches high and should be consistently used at all levels. All workers in this environment should also wear hard hats at all times. The scaffold footings should be level and be capable of supporting the loaded scaffold and 4 times the expected weight that will be put on the scaffold at any one time.

For more information on scaffolding and the regulations associated with using them, search for the OSHA 1910.28 regulation. Taking the time to carefully and safely construct and maintain scaffolding will help prevent injuries and accidents to your workers and site visitors, thus reducing the claims against your workers compensation insurance and your general liability insurance policies.

If you have any questions about your work place safety for your painting company or for your masonry or concrete construction company, please feel free to call us, toll free, at 877-687-7557. We are here to help you.