Scaffolding

It's unsettling to think that every day someone falls off a scaffold. Yearly, some 10,000 injuries result from scaffold falls and somewhere in the vicinity of 100 people die after a fall. All of this is despite responsible implementation of numerous safety precautions engineered to prevent falls. Many times, these unfortunate tragedies are the result of poor construction or faulty design. Other times, cases involve improper use or poor maintenance.

Because of all the injuries due to improper scaffolding protection, it is important to understand they types of scaffolds and their use. There are various types of scaffolds and each have its own assembly rules, regulations, inspection procedures, and requirements for minimizing falls. It is important to have knowledge of all those items, before using a scaffold. Programs such safety training and consultation services help provide a secure scaffolding environment.

Every production and employee should do their part to avoid scaffold accidents. One way to do this would be by maintaining a Safety Talks Scaffold Toolbox, such as this one. Below are tips that should be taken in consideration when using a scaffold.

General Rules for Scaffolding

- A skilled employee will be clearly responsible for all scaffolding work.
- Scaffolding shall never be used until it has been inspected and approved by a competent professional.
- Any employee expected to access the scaffold must be trained.
- If more than six feet above floor or ground level, all open sides and ends of the platforms will have guardrails and toe boards.
- Anyone in the vicinity of scaffolding must wear a hard hat.
- Employees should never climb on end frames or cross braces. End frames are only to be climbed if they are designed for such. Otherwise, all entrants must use an access ladder, stair tower or other approved entryway.
- A ladder or other climbing device will never be used on a scaffold.

Outside of the safeguards listed above, here are other things every production can do as well.

- Inspect a scaffold before use every day. A competent employee should review connectors, guardrails, fastenings, bracings and tie-ins.
- Ensure platforms are closely fenced and boarded.
- Never pile materials on scaffolds.
- At the end of every day, remove tools and unused materials.
- Avoid overloading a scaffold. Place materials over bearer and ledger points.
- Employees should know how to ground themselves during unpleasant weather.
- In winter, remove all snow and ice. Sand wet planking should be applied.
- Protect scaffolds by not banging into them.
- Use taglines to hoist materials and tools from the ground.
- Platforms and areas near scaffolds should be clear. Remove anything that might cause a slip or any object you wouldn't want to land on.

Accessibility

Access to scaffolds should be limited to authorized personnel. If a guest has to be on the scaffold, they should be wearing a hard hat and be accompanied by an authorized/competent person. There also has to be safe access for anyone erecting or dismantling a scaffold.

Every employee and employer should be playing a part in minimizing the possibility of accidents and injuries associated with scaffolding. With the help of this Safety Scaffold Toolbox Talk, expect fewer incidents and compensation claims. And expect employees to go home every day in one piece.