

This Guide provides information on scaffold inspection and maintenance including information on certification that a scaffold is safe to use.

It is part of a series of guidance material and should be read and used together with the *General guide for scaffolds and scaffolding work* which includes information on risk management as well as advice on planning, erecting, altering, dismantling, and working with scaffolds and the following material:

- *Guide to scaffolds and scaffolding*
- *Guide to suspended (swing stage) scaffolds*, and
- *Information Sheet: Tower and mobile scaffolds.*



Further information for scaffolding work near overhead electric lines is also available in the *Information Sheet: Scaffolding work near overhead electric lines.*



## Inspecting scaffolds

Procedures should be developed for inspecting and maintaining the scaffold and scaffolding to ensure the scaffold is safe to use and remains in a safe condition.

For suspended, cantilevered, spur and hung scaffolds and any other scaffold from which a person or thing could fall more than 4 metres:

- the scaffold must not be used unless there is written confirmation from a competent person that they have inspected the scaffold and construction of the scaffold is complete
- the scaffold and its supporting structure must be inspected by a competent person:
  - before the scaffold is used after an incident has occurred that might affect the stability of the scaffold
  - before the scaffold is used after repairs
  - at least every 30 days
- if an inspection indicates that a scaffold or its supporting structure creates a risk to health or safety:
  - any necessary repairs, alterations and additions must be made, and
  - the scaffold and its supporting structure are inspected by a competent person before the scaffold is used, and
- unauthorised access to the scaffold is prevented while the scaffold is incomplete or unattended.

Scaffolds with a fall risk of less than 4 metres should also be inspected before use and after any incident, repair, alteration or addition.

Inspecting scaffolds and scaffolding at a workplace is particularly important when the scaffold is in place for a long period of time. An example of a scaffold inspection checklist is at Appendix A.



## Handover inspections

Once a scaffold has been erected a handover inspection should be completed to check that the scaffold is safe to use. Where written confirmation from a competent person is required this usually takes the form of a handover certificate. An example is at Appendix B.

If alterations, repairs or additions to the scaffold are required a further inspection should be completed and a new handover certificate provided.

The handover certificate should be kept at the workplace until the scaffold has been dismantled.



## Post-handover inspections

Regular post-handover inspections should be completed once a scaffold is in use. How often these inspections are done will vary depending on the type and size of the scaffold, scaffold use, workplace conditions, the weather and any risk of scaffold collapse.

Scaffold inspections must be completed every 30 days for scaffolds with a fall risk of more than 4 metres. The designer or supplier of the scaffold should be consulted on the intervals for inspection when the scaffold is first installed.

If an inspection identifies a problem with the scaffold, access to the scaffold must be controlled and any necessary repairs, alterations and additions completed. Once the work is complete the scaffold must be inspected again. Where written confirmation from a competent person is required a new handover certificate should be provided.

Regular scaffold maintenance should also include inspections of stored scaffold components as well as those in use. Scaffolding stored in areas exposed to the weather can become corroded. Each item of scaffolding should be inspected before being incorporated into a scaffold.

Inspection records should be kept at the workplace or be readily accessible near the scaffold should they be required. Inspection records should include the location, comments, date and time of inspections, relevant design or specification reference and the person who carried out the inspection.



## Scaffolding

Suppliers and owners of plant must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the plant is without risk to health and safety when properly used. To identify defects, procedures for regularly inspecting new and re-used scaffolding should be developed and implemented. If any affected components are detected they should be repaired or disposed of and replaced as required.

Scaffolding should meet the requirements set out in the manufacturer's or designer's specifications or relevant technical standards e.g. the strength of component material. Scaffolding should be regularly inspected and maintained to ensure the continued structural integrity of an erected scaffold.



## Further information

Codes of practice, guidance material and other resources are available on the [Safe Work Australia](http://www.swa.gov.au) website ([www.swa.gov.au](http://www.swa.gov.au)).

## 1. Scaffold vicinity

- Has public protection been provided?
- Have safeguards against overhead electric lines been provided?
- Is there control over vehicle movement?
- Is there control over crane operation?
- Are there controls for storage, handling and using hazardous substances?
- Are scaffolds erected a safe distance away from trenches or excavations?

## 2. Supporting structure

- Is the supporting structure in a safe condition?
- Does the supporting structure have satisfactory strength?
- Are there controls to prevent deterioration of the supporting structure?
- Are all measures to strengthen the supporting structure satisfactory?
- Is the risk of the supporting structure being overloaded from other sources satisfactorily controlled?
- Is the scaffold built on solid ground? If built on soft ground are soleboards used to properly distribute the load?

## 3. Soleboards and baseplates

- Are there enough soleboards?
- Are the soleboards of suitable material and in a serviceable condition?
- Are the soleboards secure?
- Are there enough baseplates?
- Are the baseplates of the correct type?
- Are the baseplates serviceable and of suitable dimensions?
- Are the baseplates secure?

## 4. Scaffold structure

- Are the standards bearing firmly?
- Are the standards plumb or as designed?
- Are the longitudinal standard spacings correct?
- Are the transverse standard spacings correct?
- Are the joints in standards correctly positioned?
- Are the joints in standards correctly secured—special duty or hung scaffold?
- Are the ledgers level or as designed?
- Are the ledgers continuous or as designed?
- Are the lift heights correct?
- Are the horizontal ledger spacings correct?
- Are the ledgers correctly secured?
- Are ledger joints correctly positioned—tube and coupler scaffold?
- Are the joints in ledgers correctly secured—tube and coupler scaffold?
- Are there enough transoms or putlogs?
- Are the transoms or putlogs correctly positioned and secured?
- Is the bracing satisfactory?
- Is the scaffold stable?
- Are the ties correctly positioned and correctly fixed?
- Has mixing of components been approved in writing by a competent person?

**5. Platforms**

- Does the scaffold have the required number of working platforms?
- Are the working platforms at the required locations?
- Are catch platforms correctly positioned?
- Are the platforms and supporting scaffold constructed for the relevant duty live loads?
- Are the platform dimensions suitable for the intended work?
- Is there satisfactory edge protection?
- Are the platforms correctly constructed?
- Are planks secured against wind?

**6. Entry and exit**

- Is there safe entry and exit to every scaffold platform?
- Are temporary stairways correctly installed?
- Are portable ladders of an industrial grade, serviceable and correctly installed?
- Are entries, exits and access platforms correctly installed?

**7. Containment sheeting**

- Has the scaffold been designed for wind loading on containment sheeting?
- Has the retention of rainwater and its effect on increasing weight been considered?
- Are the fixing ties secure?
- Are there rips or tears?
- Are the overlap joints satisfactory?

**8. Mobile scaffolds**

- Is the supporting surface hard and flat?
- Is the area of operation free of overhead electric lines and other hazards?
- Are floor penetrations covered?
- Are the castor wheel locks in working order? They should be locked at all times, except during movement of the scaffold.

**9. General fitness for purpose**

- Is there provision for material handling?
- Are the clearances between the scaffold and adjacent structures correct?
- Is there protection from falling debris?
- Has the scaffold been safely designed to support attachments?
- Are approaches and platforms effectively lit?

# APPENDIX B – EXAMPLE SCAFFOLD HANDOVER OR INSPECTION CERTIFICATE

A person with management or control of a suspended, cantilevered, spur, hung or other scaffold from which a person or thing could fall more than 4 metres must receive written confirmation from a competent person that the scaffold has been inspected, completed and is safe for use.

This example handover or inspection certificate may also be used for minor scaffolds.

Scaffold supplier/erector		Client
Certificate No:	Client Name:	
Company Name:		
Address:	Address:	
	Site Address:	
Contact Phone:	Contact Phone:	
Fax:	Fax:	
Project Details		
Project/Reference Number:		
Description of area handed over:		
Drawings attached:		
Intended use of scaffold:		
Duty Classification:		
Number of working decks:		
Top working platform height:		
3 m Bays:	2.4 m Bays:	1.8 m Bays:
1.3 m Bays:	0.8 m Bays:	Access Bays:
Plant Design Registration Number:		Additional Details:

Handover Inspection of Scaffold	
<p>The scaffold detailed above has been erected in accordance with the attached drawings, the WHS Regulations and the <i>General guide for scaffolds and scaffolding work</i>; is informed by relevant technical standards and is suitable for its intended purpose.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> A completed scaffold inspection checklist should be provided and attached to this handover certificate stating every aspect of the inspected scaffold which meets the required standards. Subsequent inspections should be recorded on an inspection checklist and provided to the relevant person.</p>	
Name:	Signature:
High risk work licence No:	
Time:	Date:
Acceptance – on behalf of the client	
Name:	Signature:
	Date:
<p>Arrange for scaffold to be inspected at intervals not exceeding 30 days or immediately following an incident which may affect the adequacy of the scaffold. The design registration number for prefabricated scaffolding must be kept readily accessible at all times, for example near the scaffold.</p>	