

# Safety Issues

## Dismantling Scaffolds



### Tech Tip

You may have to add some parts to a scaffold before you begin to dismantle.

"Mike, take down that scaffold over there! Let's get this job cleaned up fast!"

These are all-too-familiar words. Dismantling scaffold requires as much skill, knowledge, planning and attention to detail as erecting it. Believe it or not, you may actually have to add some parts to the scaffold before you begin to dismantle it. You also need to be careful to recognize and correct possible hazards before beginning the dismantling process. Here are some tips on dismantling:

#### Preparations Before Dismantling

- **Find sufficient space to neatly stack or store the components as they are removed from the scaffold.**

This may require coordination with other trades occupying the same space or may require site preparation.

- **Check to make sure truck access is available and hasn't been blocked.**

If truck access is blocked, determine how equipment can be safely transported to a loading area.

- **Examine the scaffold base and remove or protect obstructions or hazards.**

Hazards include exposed rebar, stub piping, construction debris, etc.

- **Examine the scaffold structure.**

Pay particular attention to the scaffold ties. Inspect plank to assure both ends of all plank and platforms are resting on load-bearing members and all critical bracing is intact. It may be necessary to replace some plank.

- **Repair or replace any questionable components.**

If ties have been removed, it may be necessary to stabilize the weakened scaffold before it's safe to dismantle.

- **Examine all platforms for soundness**

Look for notches in plank, saw kerfs, chemical contamination, rotting, etc. Replace all defective plank before dismantling. Don't put defective plank back into inventory.

Once you are sure the scaffold and surroundings are safe for the dismantling crew to begin, you can start dismantling.

#### Beginning Dismantling

- **Wear proper safety gear.**

Includes hard hats, gloves, safety shoes and other safety equipment required by the job condition.

- **Begin dismantling at the top of the scaffold.**

Remove guardrails and posts first. Hand those components to workers below. When you pass down components (daisy chain), stand where someone can't drop a part on you. Don't store the disassembled scaffold components on the scaffold. Don't throw components down.

- **Partially remove the top platform and install it on the lift below.**

Remove the remainder of the platform from the lift below, and continue dismantling the scaffold components in the opposite sequence as it was installed. If your scaffold was pinned, only remove the pins at the scaffold frame base.

Keep coupling pins (the stacking pins), fastened to the top of the frame below. This eliminates the need to handle loose coupling pins in the air and reduces the risk of dropping one.

- **Examine scaffold components for damage.**

Separate damaged components for later disposal or repair. Don't let damaged parts get back into inventory; they could hurt someone later.

- **Neatly store damage-free components.**

After the components are on the ground, make sure they are free of damage. Neatly store the damage-free components in racks, staging areas or on the truck.

- **Don't remove scaffold ties until the scaffold above the tie has been completely disassembled to the tie level.**

Properly dismantling scaffold is as important as properly erecting it. Safety is everyone's responsibility.

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