WORK SAFE BC

WorkSafe Bulletin

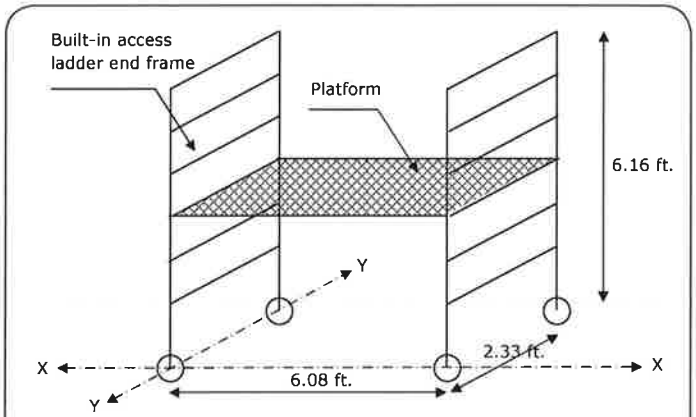
The hazards of baker's scaffolds

In recent years, several workers have been seriously injured or killed while working with baker's scaffolds. Baker's scaffolds, also known as mobile or rolling tower scaffolds, can be very dangerous if not designed, maintained, assembled, and used safely.

Getting on and off a baker's scaffold can be hazardous, because climbing up its end frame tends to destabilize the scaffold and may cause it to tip over. When a worker climbs the scaffold's end frame and swings around onto the platform, the scaffold can become unstable. Relatively lightweight scaffolds may not be engineered to resist the potential overturning effect of the worker activity. Workers have fallen off baker's scaffolds because they lack guardrails. Moving a scaffold with a worker on it increases the risk of falling.

Climbing on a ladder or other object placed on top of the platform is extremely dangerous due to a risk of tipping.

The two standards referenced in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (ANSI A10.8 — American National Standard for Construction and Demolition Operations — Scaffolding — Safety Requirements and CSA Z797 — Code of Practice for Access Scaffold) provide only minimum safety requirements for the construction, operation, maintenance, and use of baker's scaffolds and do not address design requirements for ensuring their stability.



Typical configuration of a baker's scaffold

Design requirements for baker's scaffolds are referenced in CSA S269.2 — Access Scaffolding for Construction Purposes. This standard requires the scaffold to resist tipping against two times or more the load exerted on it when a worker accesses, uses, or exits it.

How to reduce the risk of injury when using baker's scaffolds

- Purchase heavier-weight scaffolds.
- Ensure that the load a worker exerts on a scaffold while accessing and using it is within the perimeter of the equipment.
  - Provide workers with a safe method to access and exit from the scaffold. Climbing the exterior end frame may cause overturning. For example, some manufacturers now offer scaffolds with hatches in the platform, allowing workers to climb up the inside of the end frame.

  - Increase the scaffold's base dimension(s) by installing outriggers.
- Ensure that workers do not put boxes, ladders, or any other equipment on a baker's scaffold to gain additional height.
- When required, install guardrails on the work platform.
- Only stack scaffolds in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Additional bracing may be required.
- When a scaffold's height exceeds three times its smaller base dimension, secure the scaffold to a building or structure.
- Provide workers with the manufacturer's written instructions, and ensure that they understand and follow them when erecting and working with scaffolds.
- Regardless of who assembled a scaffold, inspect it before each use and after any modification to ensure that:
  - The scaffold has been erected according to the manufacturer's instructions.
  - All the connections between the scaffold parts are secure.
  - The rated capacity of the scaffold will bear the weight placed on it.
  - All required components are in place and are compatible with one another.
  - The scaffold is in good repair.
- If a scaffold has a worker or a load on it, ensure that it is moved only in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and Section 13.24 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (Movable Work Platforms — Work Platforms on Wheels).
- If a scaffold is on wheels, secure it to prevent movement before workers access or stand on the platform.
- Provide safe work procedures based on the type of the work to be performed.
- Provide supervision to ensure all workers using the baker's scaffold are trained in its use and follow safe work procedures.

For more information

WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line: 604.276.3100 or toll-free 1.888.621.SAFE (7233)