STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Scaffolding Inspection SOP

Document no.	SOP-CON-005
Revision	1.0
Owner	Site Safety Officer
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To make sure every scaffold is erected correctly, inspected before first use, tagged clearly, and re-inspected regularly so only safe scaffolds remain in service.

2. Scope

Applies to all supported scaffolds erected on the construction site, from initial erection through periodic inspection to dismantling and storage.

Definitions

Competent person (scaffold)	A person trained and authorized to erect, inspect and tag scaffolds and to judge whether one is safe for use.
Scaffold tag	The color-coded card at the access point showing whether a scaffold has been inspected and is safe to use, restricted, or unsafe.
Sole board	A board placed under a scaffold base plate to spread its load and prevent settlement on soft or uneven ground.

3. Responsibilities

Scaffolder	Erects, alters and dismantles the scaffold to the design, and completes the initial tagging inspection.
Scaffold User	Checks the tag before climbing, uses the scaffold as intended, and reports any damage noticed while working on it.
Site Supervisor	Schedules periodic inspections, enforces the tag system and removes unsafe scaffolds from use.
Safety Officer	Audits inspection records and tag compliance, and trains competent persons for scaffold inspection.

RACI matrix

Activity	Scaffolder	Scaffold User	Site Supervisor	Safety Officer
Check ground and base before erection	R/A	-	C	I
Erect scaffold to design	R/A	-	I	I
Complete initial and periodic	R	I	A	C

Activity	Scaffolder	Scaffold User	Site Supervisor	Safety Officer
inspections				
Check tag before climbing	I	R/A	I	-
Remove an unsafe scaffold from use	R	I	A	C

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Scaffold design or manufacturer's erection instructions
- Scaffold components (standards, ledgers, transoms, guardrails, toe boards)
- Sole boards or base plates
- Color-coded scaffold tags (safe, restricted, unsafe)
- Scaffold inspection register
- Ties or bracing hardware

Personal protective equipment

- Hard hat
- Full body harness for scaffolders working at height
- Safety boots with toe protection
- Gloves

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Check the ground and base** Before erection, the scaffolder checks that the ground is firm and level, and places sole boards or base plates under each standard to prevent settlement.	Scaffolder	☐
5.2	**Erect to the design** Erect the scaffold following the manufacturer's instructions or an engineer's design, including bay spacing, bracing, ties to the structure and guardrails at each working level.	Scaffolder	☐
5.3	**Install guardrails and toe boards** Fit guardrails at the required height and toe boards along every working platform edge before the scaffold is used, including on stair towers and access points.	Scaffolder	☐
5.4	**Complete the initial inspection** Once erected, the competent person inspects the full scaffold against the design and checklist before anyone else is permitted to use it. **Checkpoint:** No one uses the scaffold until the initial inspection is signed off and a green tag is displayed.	Scaffolder	☐
5.5	**Tag the scaffold** Attach the color-coded tag at the access point, marking it safe for use, restricted to certain trades, or unsafe, with the inspection date and inspector's name.	Scaffolder	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.6	**Check the tag before every use** Anyone about to climb the scaffold checks the tag at the access point and does not use it if the tag shows restricted, unsafe, or is missing or out of date. **Warning:** Never use a scaffold with a missing, expired or red (unsafe) tag.	Scaffold User	☐
5.7	**Carry out periodic inspections** The competent person re-inspects the scaffold on the schedule set by the site or local regulations, checking ties, bracing, guardrails, toe boards, platforms and base condition.	Scaffolder	☐
5.8	**Inspect after weather or modification** Re-inspect the scaffold after strong wind, heavy rain, or any alteration, and update the tag before it is used again. **Checkpoint:** A scaffold is re-tagged after any structural alteration before it is used again.	Scaffolder	☐
5.9	**Check for settlement or damage** During each inspection, check base plates and sole boards for sinking or shifting, and check components for bent tubes, damaged couplers or missing parts.	Scaffolder	☐
5.10	**Record the inspection** Record the inspection date, findings and outcome on the scaffold inspection register, in addition to updating the tag at the scaffold.	Scaffolder	☐
5.11	**Report and remove defects** If a defect is found, switch the tag to unsafe or restricted immediately, barricade the affected access, and report the defect to the site supervisor for repair.	Site Supervisor	☐
5.12	**Dismantle in reverse sequence** Dismantle the scaffold in the reverse order of erection, removing ties last and lowering components rather than dropping them, and clear the tag once the scaffold no longer exists.	Scaffolder	☐

6. Quality checks

- Every scaffold displays a current, signed tag at its access point.
- Periodic inspections are logged on the schedule required by site policy or local regulations.
- No scaffold is used with a missing, expired, restricted or unsafe tag.
- Defects found during inspection are repaired or the scaffold is removed from use before further work.

7. Records

- Scaffold inspection register
- Scaffold design or erection instructions
- Tag history for each scaffold structure
- Defect reports and repair confirmations

8. KPIs

- Percentage of scaffolds with a current, valid tag
- Number of defects identified during periodic inspection
- Average time to repair or remove a defective scaffold from service

9. Common mistakes

- Climbing a scaffold without checking the tag first.
- Skipping the re-inspection after heavy wind or rain.
- Removing a guardrail or brace temporarily and forgetting to reinstall it.
- Not updating the inspection register even though the physical tag was changed.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Ilia Pirozhenko

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

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