Health and Safety Procedure

Mobile Access Tower Scaffold

Applicable Legislation

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)  
Work at Height Regulations 2005  
The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)

Introduction

Falls from height continue to cause a major problem and need to be prevented. Falls from height have resulted in death or injuries to employees and volunteers. These usually happen because the tower scaffold is not properly erected or used. Aluminium tower scaffolds are light and can easily overturn. Scaffolds rely on all the parts being in place to ensure adequate strength and they can collapse if sections are left out.

Purpose – it’s aims and objectives

This procedure provides the minimum rules that apply to the erection and use of mobile access tower/scaffold on Oxfordshire County Council premises. It does not form a complete specification for the erection of tower scaffold and the competent person must follow the manufacturer’s instructions.

Scope

This procedure applies to all establishments and activities where tower scaffolds are erected and used as a working platform. It will outline the key responsibilities of managers and those who work at height and use access equipment. For further detailed information managers should refer to the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and HSE guidance on Tower Scaffolds.

Only competent persons are permitted to erect and inspect tower scaffolds

PASMA is the lead trade association for the mobile access tower industry and represents manufacturers, suppliers, specifiers and users, it provides and oversees the industry standard training scheme and is a major publisher of safety-related knowledge, information and guidance.

Select the right equipment

All mobile access towers (scaffold towers) must conform to EN1004 or BS EN1004 which is the European product standard. Towers which conform to this standard must meet minimum safety requirements. For further product information visit the PASMA website.
Erecting the tower scaffold:

- The person erecting the tower scaffold must be competent to do so.
- Follow manufacturer’s instructions; do not exceed the maximum height allowed for a given base dimension. The taller the tower the more likely it is to become unstable.
- If the tower is to be used in exposed conditions or outside, the height of the working platform should be no more than three times the minimum base dimension for an untied tower.
- If the tower is to be used inside, the height may be extended to three and a half times the minimum base dimension for an untied tower.
- Do not mix components from different types of scaffold.
- Make sure that the tower is resting on firm level ground with the wheels or feet properly supported; securely fix any wheels to the scaffold. Do not use bricks or building blocks to take the weight of any part of the tower.
- Tie the tower rigidly to the structure if it is likely to be exposed to strong winds, used for grit blasting or water jetting, if heavy materials are lifted up the outside of the tower, or if the base is too small for the height of the tower needed.
- Provide a safe way to get to and from the work platform e.g. by an internal ladder. It is not safe to climb up the outside.
- Never overload working platforms and do not apply pressure, which could overturn the tower, e.g. by working off a ladder placed on top of the working platform.

Before using the tower scaffold check:

- All components are in good condition.
- Scaffold tower is vertical.
- Wheel brakes are on.
- Outriggers are extended.

Before accessing the tower scaffold always ensure:

- Always climb a tower on the inside, using the ladder rungs and gain access to the platform through the trap door. Never climb on the outside of a tower.
- Always make sure there is a secure hand-hold at all landing places.

The stability will be affected if the tower scaffold is:

- Sheeted and/or likely to be exposed to strong winds.
- Loaded with heavy equipment or materials.
- Used to hoist heavy equipment or materials or support rubbish chutes.
- Used for operations involving heavy or awkward equipment e.g. grit blasting, water jetting etc.
- Climbed upon from the outside.
- Used as a support for ladders.

Edge protection

- Suitable edge protection must be provided on platforms.
- Guard-rails should be at least 910mm high and toe boards at least 150mm high.
• An intermediate guard-rail or suitable alternative should be provided so the unprotected gap does not extend beyond 470mm.

When moving the tower

• Check that there are no power lines in the way or over-head obstructions.
• Check that the ground is firm and level.
• Do not allow people or materials to remain on the tower.
• Beware of towers ‘running away with you’ when being moved down or across slopes.
• Push or pull only from the base; never use powered vehicles.
• Never move it in windy conditions.

When must tower scaffolds be inspected?

Tower scaffolds must be inspected by a competent person:
• Before first use.
• After substantial alteration.
• After any event likely to have affected its stability.

What training is required?

Only competent persons are permitted to erect and inspect tower scaffolds. A person is deemed competent only if they have completed a recognised training course on erection and use of mobile scaffolds within the last three years.

For further information and advice:

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<th>OCC Health and Safety Team</th>
<th><a href="mailto:healthandsafetyhelp@oxfordshire.gov.uk">healthandsafetyhelp@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a></th>
<th>Tel: 03300 240849</th>
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<td>Health and Safety Executive (HSE)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm">http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm</a></td>
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<td>Tower scaffolds – What you need to do!</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/scaffold.htm">http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/scaffold.htm</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prefabricated Access Suppliers’ &amp; Manufacturers’ Association Ltd (PASMA)</td>
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