

September 2024

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2024-09-03 TBT Scaffolding

Competent Person

While most scaffolding is designed for ease of erection and use, there are still many hazards associated with scaffolding that can result in someone getting injured or even killed. Because of the various hazards associated with scaffolding, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, also called OSHA, requires employers to designate someone at every work site where scaffolding is used by their employees to perform critical functions to help ensure the safety of those employees who work on and around the scaffolding. And the person responsible for doing this is known as the “**Competent Person**”.

Here is an overview of a few of the major duties performed by the Competent Person at a job site where scaffolding is being utilized:

The Competent Person is responsible for overseeing the erection of all scaffolding to ensure it is set up as designed per the scaffold manufacturer instructions. Conversely, the Competent Person must also oversee the disassembly of scaffolding, as well as the movement of any scaffolding, to ensure these activities are done safely;

The Competent Person must also inspect scaffolding as soon as it has been erected, as well as before first use on each shift, to identify any hazards that need to be corrected before employee use. And additional inspections by the Competent Person must be performed after any hazard increasing occurrence;

The Competent Person will also make sure that any powered scaffolding system is functioning and operated safely per the manufacturer’s instructions;

The Competent Person must ensure scaffolding is maintained as required per the manufacturer, and to oversee any modifications, alterations, or repairs to the scaffolding that may become necessary while it is in use;

The Competent Person must make sure scaffolding in use is capable of supporting the loads to which it is subjected, and to see that it does not become overloaded during use;

And last but certainly not least, **The Competent Person** must have the authority from his or her employer to remove or prevent workers from using any scaffolding found to be unsafe until the hazard has been corrected, repaired, or the scaffolding is removed from service.

However, the Competent Person cannot be present everywhere on the jobsite, nor can they see everything that is going on. That is why some of the next several toolbox talks will be dedicated to educating us on some basic Federal OSHA regulations pertaining to scaffold design and use, so we can be better prepared to identify some of the most common hazards to watch for when we work with scaffolding. And when you do see a potential problem, be sure to take steps to ensure the safety of yourself and others, and then inform the Competent Person or your supervisor of what you’ve seen.

Do you know who the Competent Person for scaffolding is at our worksites? [Identify your competent person(s) for scaffolding].

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2024-09-09 TBT National Construction Suicide Stand- down

Monday Sept 9th is a day for recognition to honor all those lives lost to suicide and show your commitment to getting every person home and back to the jobsite healthy every day.

HOW TO LISTEN

Whether you know someone who is battling with thoughts of self-harm or not, active listening is a skill you can turn into a habit so those around you feel confident that what they tell you is heard and valued. Active listening is more than just hearing someone speak; it requires attention, concentration and listening with your senses.

BY THE NUMBERS

In 2020, suicide was among the top nine leading causes of death for people ages 10 to 64.– According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the suicide rate is greater than the general population for those employed in the construction industry.– Psychology research highlights how positive social interactions increase our personal well-being and provide greater life satisfaction.

WHY IT MATTERS

Active listening helps build trust and empathy between people. By seeking to understand and empathize rather than reply or solve, the other person can feel inspired to heal from their own mental health challenges. Active listening is an effective way to provide emotional support and validation.

GOOD TO KNOW

Minimize distractions. Not only is it important to put down your phone when actively listening, it is also important to quiet your inner dialogue — an intangible distraction.– Reflect what you hear. Without interrupting to give advice or finish someone's sentences, paraphrase what they have told you. For example, saying "I'm hearing that

you're having a hard time with this situation," is a way to reflect on what you have heard and provide validation.- Focus on nonverbal communication. Nod and make eye contact to show that you care when someone opens up to you. Your body language should indicate that you are not passing judgment, and they can speak freely.

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2024-09-16 TBT GFCIs

Important Things to Know About GFCIs [Reference 1910 Subpart S / 1926 Subpart K]

During annual and onboarding trainings it is discussed how tools and equipment which are grounded or double insulated help prevent electrocutions as we perform our work. Today we will discuss an important safety device that helps prevent electrocution when we are using electrical tools or equipment near water or in wet environments; but it only works as long as it is properly installed and maintained. That device is a ground fault circuit interrupter, also commonly referred to as a GFCI.

When a tool is plugged into an electrical receptacle, electricity flows from the receptacle to the tool through one of the electrical conductors in the power cord; this conductor is usually referred to as the hot wire. When the trigger or switch on the tool is activated, the current then flows through the tool to make it run, and then returns to the receptacle via another conductor in the power cord; that one is referred to as the neutral wire. Ideally the same amount of current flows from the receptacle to the tool and then back to the receptacle - unless there is a short circuit, also called a ground fault.

Electrical receptacles and breakers equipped with a ground fault circuit interrupter monitor the amount of current flowing through this path, and if it senses a drop in returning current of just a few thousandths of an amp, it almost instantaneously trips an internal breaker and stops power flowing from the receptacle. You may find GFCI-protected receptacles or breaker switches installed on temporary power poles on construction sites, on many portable generators, and in areas of buildings or other structures where water may be present, such as in bathrooms, kitchens, mixing areas, garages, open sided shops, outdoor work areas, and on top of roofs. Also be aware that one of the receptacles in a circuit containing multiple receptacles is GFCI protected, the GFCI will protect all the other receptacles wired behind it in the circuit, but not any that are wired in front of it in the circuit.

You can usually distinguish a GFCI receptacle by its two buttons, typically marked "TEST" and "RESET", placed in the center of the receptacle. There are also GFCI breaker switches that can be installed inside of a breaker box which protects all receptacles in that circuit. There are also portable GFCI-equipped devices that can be plugged into an unprotected receptacle (see handout for examples of these devices) which protect equipment plugged into them. These breakers and portable devices also have the same two "TEST" and "RESET" buttons as a GFCI receptacle.

Because GFCI devices do occasionally malfunction or wear out over time, it is vitally important that we test them at the beginning of each shift. This is typically done by depressing the "TEST" button on the receptacle or GFCI breaker; you should hear a faint

“click” sound as the device trips. You can further confirm the receptacle was de-energized by plugging in a tool such as a drill to the receptacle and try to operate it by depressing the trigger; it should not run if the GFCI tripped as designed.

Once you confirm that a GFCI receptacle or breaker switch is functioning properly, firmly press the “Reset” button to re-energize the receptacle or circuit. And if any GFCI-protected device is not functioning properly, do not use it. Instead, mark it with a danger tag or similar manner to identify it is not to be used, and then immediately notify your supervisor so it can be repaired or replaced by a qualified electrician.

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