

OSHA Training Toolbox Talk: Basic Scaffold Safety – Keeping It All Together!

[Reference 1910 Subpart D / 1926 Subpart L]

A scaffold may appear to be one large object, but in reality it is an assembly made up by multiple smaller parts that are held together by even smaller parts. So this toolbox talk will focus on those smallest parts; the pins, clamps, and couplers that serve as the glue for a scaffolding system.

Here are some of the types of things to keep an eye out for when performing work on or around supported scaffolds (*refer trainees to the hand-out for examples of the accessories to be discussed*):

- Look out for instances where the heads on spring locks inserted into the ends of collared coupler pins are not fully seated through the holes on the scaffold frames. This can occur due to the spring pins becoming weak and not fully expanding, or because the heads of the spring locks are not properly aligned with the holes in the scaffold frame;
- Make sure that swivel devices which depend on gravity to fall into the locking position, such as the pivoting retainer on a toggle pin, are properly positioned so as to prevent the accidental removal of the pin. This can occur when the retainer gets rusty, or caked with dirt or mud;
- Look to see that pigtail style retainer pins are inserted so the portion that lies against and wraps around the scaffold frame post is hanging below the portion that slides through the post. Pig tail retainer pins that are installed upside down can be easily dislodged;
- Keep an eye out for span pins with wire retainers that are not attached to both ends the pin. This often occurs when these wire retainers get stretched out, bent, or if someone forgets to snap them closed. Such conditions could allow the pin to accidentally slide out of the post;
- Make sure that swivel chips and other restraint devices used to hold cross-braces and guardrails in place are fully opened so that the brace or rail cannot slide back off the mounting pin. These retaining devices often become stuck in the closed position due to damage, rust, and dirt or mud;
- Ensure that the nuts on tube clamps are installed, and that they appear to be fully tightened. Missing or loose nuts mean the clamp is not able to do its job of holding the parts together;
- Make sure the pins on spring-loaded levers, which are utilized on some types of adjustable scaffold boards, are fully seated into the holes on the scaffold posts when released. Problems can occur when the pins on the levers are not aligned with holes in the post, as well as when the pins are bent, or when the springs on the levers are weak, missing, or damaged; and,
- Last but not least, watch out for make-shift connectors being used, such as bent nails, welding rods, or tie-wire. Using anything other than the manufacturer recommended devices can lead to failure of the connections, which could then lead to the separation of the scaffold components.

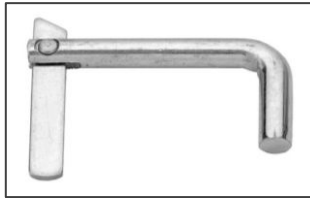
While it is the Competent Person who is responsible for making sure a scaffold is properly assembled with the proper pins, clamps, and couplers, each one of us can help ensure the scaffold maintains its structural integrity by making sure we do not remove or damage any of these critical parts. We can also help by looking out for any potential problems, such as missing, damaged, and malfunctioning parts, so that if any are detected we can immediately report them to the Competent Person so the issue can be rectified.

Does anyone want to share another example of potential problems you've seen with pins, clamps, and couplers used on scaffold systems? Thank you for your participation. Please make certain to sign your name on the training certification form so you get credit for attending today's training session.

EXAMPLES OF SCAFFOLD PINS, CLAMPS, & CONNECTORS



Collared coupling pin w/ spring lock



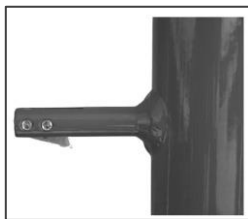
Toggle pin



Pig tail pin



Span pin



Swivel chip



Tube clamps (swivel)



Spring-loaded lever