

MIOSHA Fact Sheet

Decking Used as a Work Platform During Bridgework



Bridgework has always been at the forefront of the heavy construction industry. Bridge contractors use many different designs for their permanent and temporary work platforms. There are times when these platforms are only used to catch debris to prevent its falling into water or onto traffic and people below. At other times, the platforms are designed as formwork for a concrete deck. Typically, plywood, plyform, or oriented strand board (OSB) is used. **Whatever the formwork or decking may be designed for, when a worker uses it to walk on or perform work, it is a temporary work platform and must be designed to meet the requirements of MIOSHA, Construction Safety and Health Standard Part 12, Scaffolds and Scaffold Platforms.**

Construction Safety and Health Standard Part 12 – Scaffolds and Scaffold Platforms

Part 12, Rules 1218(1), (2) and (3) requirements for plywood scaffold platforms are stated below:

1. If plywood is used as a work platform, the plywood shall be supported by at least 2 by 10-inch planks. The planks shall support 2 parallel edges of the plywood and shall be spaced not more than 24 inches center to center.
2. The plywood work surface shall be secured to the planks.
3. If the plywood work surface is a load-carrying member, it shall have a minimum thickness of 5/8 inch.

However, Rule 1926.451(a) requires each scaffold platform, and its components are capable of supporting, without failure, not less than 4 times the maximum intended load. These alternate designs must be designed by a qualified person using acceptable engineering practices. A competent person shall supervise all scaffold erection moving and alteration and inspect all scaffold before each work shift, and after any occurrence which could affect structural integrity.

Part 12 defines the competent person as one who is experienced and capable of identifying an existing or potential hazard in surroundings, or under working conditions, that is hazardous or dangerous to an employee and who has the authority and knowledge to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate the hazards.

Part 12 defines qualified person as one who, by possession of a recognized degree, certificate, or professional standing, or who by extensive knowledge, training, and experience, has successfully demonstrated his/her ability to solve or resolve problems related to the subject matter, the work, or the project.

Engineering Considerations for Plywood Work Platforms

There are many items to consider when designing a plywood work platform. It is imperative that all designs be completed by a qualified person. Considerations for the following should be made:

- Size and type of all lumber and plywood
- Span, anchorage, securing, and spacing of supports
- Uplift due to wind and traffic
- Maximum intended load

The key to preventing injuries and fatalities related to plywood work platforms is good employee training and frequent/thorough inspections. The hazards associated with scaffold platforms must be addressed in an Accident Prevention Program required by MIOSHA Construction Safety and Health Standard Part 1, [General Rules](#), Rule 114(1).

For additional assistance, please contact the Construction Safety and Health Division at 517-284-7680 or the Consultation Education and Training Division at 517- 284-7720. Construction Safety and Health Standards can be viewed on the MIOSHA website at www.michigan.gov/mioshastandards.



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