

- Damaged or incompatible components are not used.
- The scaffolding can support the weight of the person and materials.
- Scaffolding has been certified as ready for use.

Special care shall be taken when working with mobile scaffolding (scaffolding on castors/wheels). Ensure that:

- The height of the scaffolding is not more than four times the base dimension.
- The castors are locked when persons are working on it.

Ensure that:

- All scaffolding is periodically inspected and maintained.
- The scaffolding is not moved when persons are on the platform.

HIGH 5: TRENCHES AND EXCAVATIONS

Several fatalities and injuries arise due to working in or near unprotected trenches. Before any excavation commences, checks should be made for any buried utilities such as electrical, water, gas, etc.

While working in a trench, precautions shall be taken.

(continues on the back cover)



These should include:

- Using a protective system for trenches five feet deep or greater.
- Ensuring that there is safe access to and egress from the excavation.
- Ensuring that spoils or excavated material is kept at least two feet from the edge of the excavated area.
- Daily inspections of the excavated area.
- The use of barricades to prevent mobile equipment from going over the edge.

Where practicable, benching or cutting in steps should be used to prevent a cave in from occurring.

For more information on Trenching, Excavation and Shoring, see the Occupational Safety and Health (Protective Measures) Order 1977.

Remember to:

- Plan your work properly.
- Consult the relevant documentation.
- Ensure everyone is competent for the task at hand.



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This leaflet provides guidance on best practice. However, employers are advised of the requirement to ensure that all risks are considered and adequately controlled. Further information can be found in 'A Guide to Risk Assessment'.

April 2014



The High Five

Five ways to reduce risk on construction sites.

For Small to Large Sites



OSHA HOTLINE: 623-OSHA (6742)
www.osha.gov.tt

The following five guidelines will help you to keep safe and healthy.

HIGH 1: THE BASICS

Housekeeping and Welfare

Many accidents occur from slips, trips and falls. A tidy workplace that is free of hazards like materials stored haphazardly on the floor will significantly reduce these types of accidents do not happen.

A job is not completed until the area has been cleaned. Remember that responsibility must be taken for the removal of all unnecessary materials.

All workers shall have access to:

- Clean toilet facilities
- Wholesome drinking water
- Changing rooms
- Lunch rooms



HIGH 2: FALLS FROM HEIGHT

Falls from height account for a significant number of the deaths in the construction industry in Trinidad and Tobago. Many accidents involve falls from roofs, through fragile materials, from ladders and leading edges.

Generally ensure that one:

- Works from a safe platform with proper edge protection.
- Uses equipment that would prevent a fall, such as scaffolding or a mobile working platform.
- Uses safety nets where practicable.
- Protects penetrations or holes in decking and roof material to prevent persons from falling through.
- Secures tools and materials to prevent them from falling.
- Does not work in weather conditions that would threaten one's safety and health.
- Exercises caution when working around the edges of roofs.

When portable ladders are used for access to an upper landing surface, it should be ensured that:

- The ladders are suitable and in good condition.
- The ladder rises at least 3 feet (0.9m) above the upper landing surface.

- Where practicable the ladder is secured at the top and bottom to prevent them from slipping sideways and outwards.
- The ladders are placed in a safe position so that users do not have to overstretch.

HIGH 3: MANUAL HANDLING

Manual handling injuries may result from working with heavy or awkward materials. The risk of injury is increased by repetitive jobs such as laying heavy blocks.

When lifting materials, one should ensure that:

- Mechanical means are employed where reasonably practicable.
- Suitably maintained lifting equipment is chosen
- Where possible there can be a change to lighter materials, bags, etc.
- Repetitive handling is reduced or avoided.
- Awkward posture and movements are avoided.

HIGH 4: SCAFFOLDING

Scaffolding is an essential element of construction projects and is considered to be a "place of work" under the Occupational Safety and Health Act Chap. 88:08.

Before using scaffolding, it should be ensured that:

- The scaffolding is equipped with guard rails, mid rails and toe boards.
- It is erected on sound footing.
- Platforms are tightly planked and planks are in good condition.
- It is at least ten (10) feet from electric power lines at all times.
- Fall arrest equipment is utilised where necessary.
- The persons erecting these structures are competent.