

South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
Division of Labor
Office of Occupational Safety and Health
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

OSH Program Directive Number 75-1926.451-1

Subject: Clarification of Construction Scaffolding Standards under Section 1926.451.

Standard: Article VII, Section 1926.451 (a) (2), Section 1926.451 (a) (3), Section 1926.451 (a) (7) and (8), and Section 1926.451 (d) (4), Rules and Regulations, Commissioner of Labor, State of South Carolina.

Cross Reference to Federal Standards: 29 CFR 1926.451 (a) (2), 29 CFR 1926.451 (a) (3), 29 CFR 1926.451 (a) (7) and (8), and 29 CFR 1926.451 (d) (4).

Background: This program directive clarifies the application of the above referenced standards.

Interpretation: The following interpretations are hereby given:

1. Section 1926.451 (a) (2) – Concrete block is not always an “unstable object” when used as a base for scaffolding. The circumstances and techniques under which it is used must be considered to determine its stability.
2. Section 1926.451 (a) (3) – A brace is defined in Section 1926.452 (b) (3) as a tie that holds one scaffold member in a fixed position with respect to another member. The fact that a scaffold member has a place for a brace does not necessarily require that the brace be in place, if it interferes with the erection or stocking of the scaffold. This is only true if the scaffolding is capable of supporting four times the maximum intended load and meets the other applicable requirements of section 1926.451. Also, the manufacturer’s design specifications, particularly with respect to the lateral stresses involved are an important aspect which must be considered in the decision to remove pieces of bracing.
3. Sections 1926.451 (a) (7) and (8) – A scaffold plank is considered a component of the scaffolding. As such, it must be capable of supporting four times the maximum intended load without failure (a safety factor of four). The fact that a plank might have a split in one end does not automatically mean that

it must be removed from service, provided it does not otherwise create a hazard to the employees.

4. Section 1926.451 (d) (4) – The standard requires scaffold legs to be placed on a foundation that is adequate to support four times the intended load of the scaffold. The standard does not require that base plates always be employed, but only when conditions necessitate their use. For example, the scaffold legs cannot be placed on a mud foundation without a base to prevent the legs from sinking into the mud.

As in all cases, the determination of compliance or non compliance depends upon the conditions the safety specialist observes at the time of inspection. These four interpretations are meant as guidelines only.

Effective Date: This instruction is effective upon receipt and will remain in effect until cancelled or superseded by amendment to the regulation or program directive.

Robert C. Parks, Director
Division of Occupational Safety and Health
April 11, 1975