

INFORMATION BULLETIN



CONSTRUCTION SAFETY ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

IB006

Page 1 of 2

Scaffold Planks

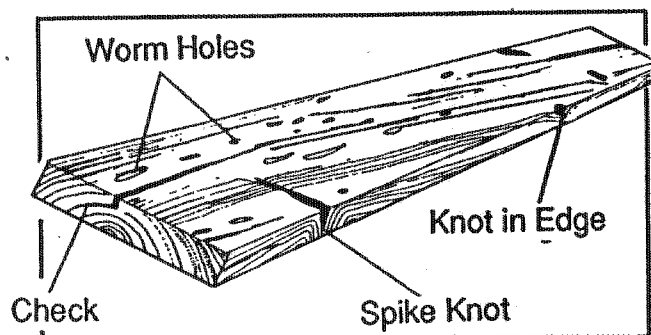
Each year the Ontario construction industry suffers lost-time injuries connected with scaffolds. Workers are injured climbing up and down scaffolds, erecting and dismantling scaffolds, working from scaffolds, and performing related tasks. One cause of injury is failure to secure planks. In this area especially, the Construction Safety Association of Ontario wants to alert the industry to potential hazards.

The proper use of planks on a scaffold or other work platform is governed by the Regulations for Construction Projects under Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The regulations specify that wooden planks used on a scaffold or other work platform must

- be number 1 grade spruce
- bear a legible stamp or be permanently identified as being number 1 grade spruce
- be at least 48mm x 248mm (1-7/8" x 9-3/4")
- be arranged so their span does not exceed 2.1 metres (7 feet)
- overhang their supports by no less than 15 cm (6") and no more than 30 cm (12")
- be laid tightly side by side across the full width of the scaffold at the working level
- be cleated or otherwise secured against slipping
- be capable of carrying any load likely to be applied and as a minimum be capable of carrying 2.4 kilonewtons per square metre (50 lbs./sq. ft.).

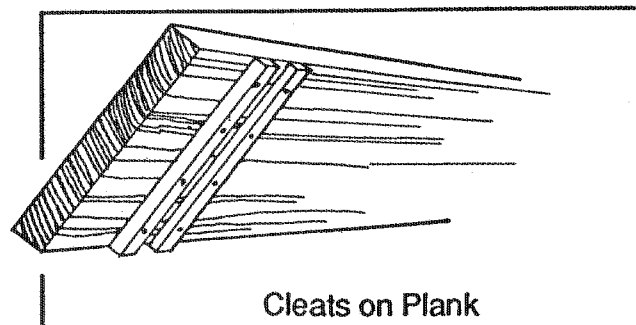
Note: In many instances it has been found that scaffolding is overloaded and does not meet this requirement.

In addition, the Construction Safety Association recommends that planks be inspected regularly before use. When choosing scaffold planks, cull out planks with large knots in the edge, spike knots, splits, checks, wanes, worm holes, and steeply sloping grain patterns.

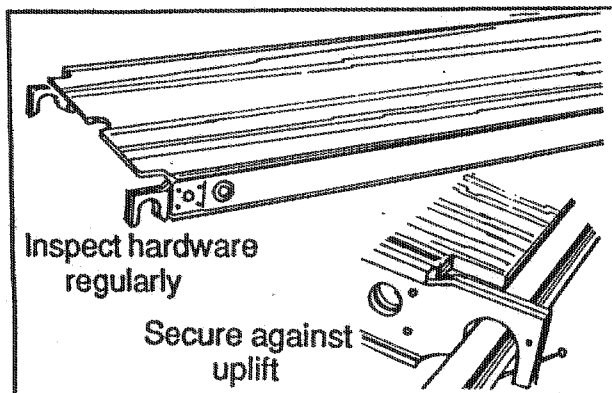


Defective planks should be removed from service.

Failure to comply with the requirement for cleats or other protection against slipping can result in critical or fatal injury. Unsecured planks can be dislodged by the movement of personnel, equipment, and material.



One alternative to standard scaffold planks is the prefabricated platform unit made of plywood with a steel or aluminum frame. The hooks and other hardware used to secure such decks to the scaffold frame must be checked regularly for looseness, distortion, and cracks. Platforms of this type should also be secured against uplift. Otherwise, when left unloaded, they can be blown off the scaffold by wind.



In the masonry trade the working platform is a combination of planks and scaffold brackets. Brackets are fitted on the front of the scaffolding, planked two wide and can be adjusted to keep the mason working at a convenient height.

When using scaffold brackets, take the following precautions.

- Make sure that brackets are mounted securely on the frame all the way down.
- Never stock materials on the bracket working platform. **The working platform is for the worker only.**
- Make sure that planks laid on the brackets extend at least 15 cm (6") beyond the frames at either end and are cleated or otherwise secured to prevent shifting and slippage.
- Place brackets so the level where the worker stands is no more than 1 metre (39") from the level where material is stored.