

Australian Standard for Scaffolding

The **Australian standard for scaffolding** is first and foremost about ensuring worker safety. All scaffolding assembly and operation in Australia is guided by official Work, Health and Safety (WHS) regulations. The aim is to ensure that scaffolding is assembled according to the correct standards and specifications, to create safe, stable work platforms.

Only licensed scaffolders are allowed to erect and dismantle scaffolding in Australia, as any working platform that presents a fall of more than four metres is classified as High-Risk Work.

Overview of Australian Scaffolding Standards

Scaffolding needs to be assembled in such a way as to protect workers from the hazards associated with construction work, like being struck by falling objects, or falling themselves. Scaffolding standards cover every aspect, from initial design through to dismantling.

The Australian standard for scaffolding stipulates that only certified, competent people may design scaffolds. They should also oversee assembly, and a similarly competent expert must inspect the scaffolding for compliance before it's used. Regular inspections are required for the duration of the construction project.

The regulations also cover additional aspects like scaffold load capacity, the type of materials used in the structure, working platforms and the required **scaffold handrail height** in Australia.

Workers must be compliant and certified too, and they need to wear the correct safety gear and follow specified procedures when working on scaffolding.

Key national and state-based scaffolding regulations

What Australian standard applies to scaffolding?

Australia has both national and state-based scaffolding standards. **AS/NZ 4576** provides an overall Guideline for Scaffolding, while the **AS/NZS 1576 series** is the specific main scaffolding standard used across the country.

Other scaffolding standards cover fixed platforms, walkways, stairways and ladders, as well as providing regulations for aluminium structures, [portable scaffolding](#) units and scaffold decking components.

What is AS/NZS 1576?

The AS/NZS 1576 scaffolding series is the primary Australian standard for scaffolding. It applies to any type of assembly or dismantling, the design and manufacture of scaffolding, and the import and supply of scaffolding equipment.

AS/NZS 1576 includes overall requirements for scaffolding, plus specifications and regulations for:

- Prefabricated scaffolding
- Prefabricated [tube and coupler scaffolding](#)
- Metal tube and coupler scaffolding
- Suspended scaffolds
- Couplers and accessories
- Prefabricated split heads and trestles
- Prefabricated vertical ladders
- Prefabricated steel stair treads

The AS/NZS 1576 standard also sets out requirements and regulations for the training and certification of scaffolders. It covers all aspects of scaffold use, from safe site selection and preparation to dismantling. Safe erection and alteration are also included, as are inspection and maintenance of both the scaffold as a whole structure and all its component parts.

List of Scaffolding Safety Standards Codes

- AS/NZS 1576 - Scaffolding:
 - AS 1576.1: 2010 - Scaffolding - General Requirements
 - AS 1576.2: 2016 - Scaffolding - Couplers and Accessories
 - AS 1576.3: 1995 - Scaffolding - Prefabricated Split Heads
 - AS 1576.4: 1992 - Scaffolding - Suspended Scaffolds
 - AS 1576.5: 1995 - Scaffolding - Prefabricated Vertical Ladders
 - AS 1576.6: 1995 - Scaffolding - Prefabricated Steel Stair Treads
- AS 1577 – Formwork / Scaffold Decking Component:
 - AS 1577: 2013 – Formwork / Scaffold Decking Component
- AS 1657 - Fixed Platforms, Walkways, Stairways, and Ladders:
 - AS 1657: 2013 - Fixed Platforms, Walkways, Stairways, and Ladders - Design, Construction, and Installation
- AS 1664 - Aluminium Structures:
 - AS 1664.1: 2011 - Aluminium Structures - Limit State Design
- AS 3610 - Formwork for Concrete:
 - AS 3610: 1995 - Formwork for Concrete
- AS 3610 - Masonry in Small Buildings:
 - AS 3700: 2018 - Masonry in Small Buildings
- AS 3850 - Tilt-Up Concrete Construction:
 - AS 3850: 2015 - Tilt-Up Concrete Construction
- AS/NZS 4576 - Guidelines for Scaffolding:
 - AS/NZS 4576: 1995 - Guidelines for Scaffolding

State-Based Variations on the Australian Standard for Scaffolding

Australian states have small variations on scaffolding standards. However, all use the above-listed scaffolding safety standards codes. Differences mainly lie in adapting the standards to match local conditions, such as climate and soil foundation conditions.

For instance, in regions prone to high winds, different materials may be required in the scaffolding construction to provide better tensile strength and a safe degree of flexibility.

There can also be small variations in specifications. Different states may have different rules around the maximum distance allowed for the ties between node points on a scaffold construction, as another example.

Regulatory Authorities for Australian Scaffolding Standards

Each state has its own regulatory authority responsible for overseeing compliance for the construction industry, in line with the national Australian standard for scaffolding. These fall under the auspices of [Safe Work Australia](#).

[SafeWork NSW](#)

Supplies licences and certification for scaffolding work, and provides work health and safety advice. Responsible for enforcing health and safety regulations and investigating workplace incidents.

[WorkSafe Victoria](#)

Responsible for helping avoid workplace injuries, and enforcing Victoria's occupational health and safety laws. This includes managing service delivery to rehabilitate injured workers.

[WorkSafe Queensland](#)

Responsible for enforcing health and safety laws and educating employers, as well as investigating workplace incidents and prosecuting non-compliance.

[WorkSafe ACT](#)

Provides licences for scaffolders who meet the WHS requirements and monitors compliance with these.

[NT WorkSafe](#)

Ensures that scaffolding companies meet their legal requirements, while also educating them on laws and standards. Conducts site visits and inspections.

[SafeWork SA](#)

Licenses scaffolding companies and their workers, and generally enforces WHS laws, as well as investigating workplace accidents.

[WorkSafe WA](#)

Administration and implementation of health and safety laws, with an emphasis on reducing workplace injuries.

[WorkSafe Tasmania](#)

Overseeing that scaffolding companies ensure their workers' health and safety by complying to all applicable laws and regulations, and investigating breaches.

Changes and Updates to the Australian Standard for Scaffolding

If your company uses scaffolding in its construction projects, it's critical that you stay abreast of any changes and updates to the Australian scaffolding standards. This is not only to ensure that you remain in compliance with the regulations, but so that your employees are protected by the latest guidelines.

Regulations can require updating as a result of a variety of factors, such as changes in weather patterns, development of new materials and scaffold assembly methods, or as a result of contemporary industry safety research.

Final Advice on Scaffolding Safety Standards

The Australian standard for scaffolding plays a crucial role in helping to ensure worker safety on construction projects. It's vital that any company involved in the industry thoroughly understands the regulations and requirements, and rigorously implements them, to prevent accidents and injuries.

If you need personalised advice about your specific scaffolding project on the NSW Central Coast, don't hesitate to [contact Alta Scaffolding](#).