



# Safety Bulletin EM 385-1-1

Mobile District Safety and Occupational Health Office  
**SCAFFOLD PLANKING**

Bulletin 40-09

The 15 September 2008 Safety Manual (yellow book) is now in effect for most new contracts and government operations. Please note the changes for scaffold planking as stated below.

## 22.B.08 Planking.

a. All wood planking shall be selected for scaffold plank use as recognized by grading rules established by a recognized independent inspection agency for the species of wood used.

(1) The maximum permissible spans for 2-in x 10-in (5-cm x 25.4-cm) (nominal) or 2-in x 9-in (5-cm x 22.8-cm) (rough) solid sawn wood planks shall be as shown in Table 22-3:

(2) The maximum permissible span for 1 ¼ in x 9 in (3.1 cm x 22.8 cm) or wider wood plank of full thickness with a maximum intended load of 50 lb/ft<sup>2</sup> shall be 4 ft (1.2 m).

b. Fabricated planks and platforms may be used in lieu of solid sawn wood planks. Maximum spans for such units shall be as recommended by the manufacturer based on the maximum intended load being calculated as specified in Table 22-3.

c. Planking shall be secured to prevent loosening, tipping, or displacement and supported or braced to prevent excessive spring or deflection. Intermediate beams shall be provided to prevent dislodgement of planks due to deflection. > **See 24.A.04.**

d. Planking shall be laid with edges close together across the entire access surface. There will be no spaces through which personnel, equipment, or material could fall.

e. When planking is lapped, each plank shall lap its supports at least 12 in (30.4 cm). Scaffold planks shall extend over their end supports not less than 6 in (15.2 cm) (unless the planking is manufactured with restraining hooks or equivalent means of preventing movement) nor more than 12 in (30.4 cm).

f. Where the ends of planks abut each other to form a flush floor, the butt joint shall be at the centerline of a pole and abutted ends shall rest on separate bearers.

g. For outrigger scaffolds, the platform will be nailed or bolted to the outriggers and shall extend to within 3 in (7.6 cm) of the building wall.

h. Planking shall be supported or braced to prevent excessive spring or deflection and secured and supported to prevent loosening, tipping, or displacement.

i. When a scaffold materially changes its direction, the platform planks shall be laid to prevent tipping.

(1) The planks that meet the corner bearer at an angle shall be laid first, and extend over the diagonally placed bearer far enough to have a good safe bearing but not far enough to involve any danger from tipping, and (2) The planking running in the opposite direction at an angle shall be laid so as to extend over and rest on the first layer of planking.

j. Planks shall be maintained in good condition. When cracks exceed 1.5 times the width of the board the plank will not be used. Planks with notches deeper than 1/3 the width of the plank will not be used. Planks with saw kerfs shall not be used.