

Plank & Platform Inspection Guidelines

Preface

This document is intended for use by all workers who use solid sawn wood scaffold planks, engineered wood scaffold planks, inner access decks, composite (fabricated) scaffold planks and metal scaffold planks/decks. Scaffold planks should be inspected prior to each use. This document provides you with information in order to identify various planks and conduct a proper visual inspection. Employers should distribute this presentation to all users of scaffold plank.

For more information on scaffold safety material, contact the:
Scaffold and Access Industry Association, Inc.
Phone: (816) 595-4860
www.saia.org

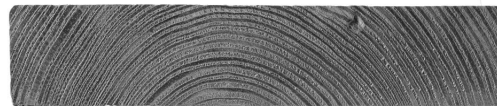
Definitions

COMPETENT PERSON – Means one who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them. The Competent Person must be knowledgeable about the requirements of applicable standards.

QUALIFIED PERSON – Means one who by possession of a recognized degree, certificate or professional standing or who has extensive knowledge, training, and experience, has successfully demonstrated the ability to solve or resolve problems relating to the subject matter, the work, or the project.

Scaffold Plank Identification

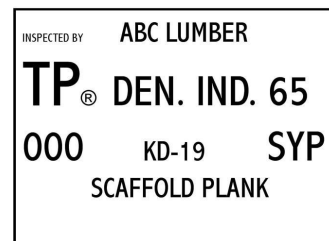
Solid Sawn - Milled from a “solid” piece of timber



Mandatory Requirements

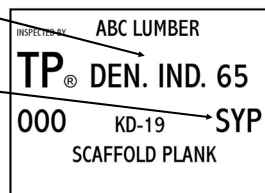
GRADE STAMP from a grading agency approved by the American Lumber Standards Committee (ALSC).

We will explain the necessary components of a grade stamp with the example grade stamp shown here.



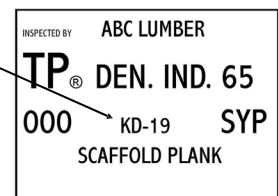
Mandatory Requirements:

- **GRADE DESCRIPTION** – This example shows “Dense Industrial 65” but could include “Select Scaffold” or “Premium Scaffold”.
- **WOOD SPECIES** – This example shows SYP (Southern Yellow Pine) but could include Douglas-fir, Hem-Fir, etc.



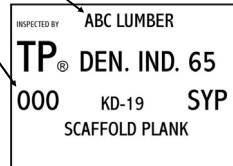
Mandatory Requirements:

- **MOISTURE CONTENT** – This example shows Kiln-Dried (KD) to a moisture content of 19% or less at the time of manufacture.



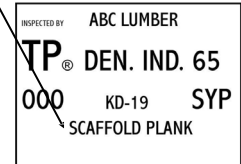
Mandatory Requirements:

- MANUFACTURING MILL NAME – This example shows “ABC Lumber”
- REGISTERED MILL NUMBER – This example shows #000.



Mandatory Requirements:

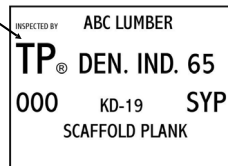
- SCAFFOLD PLANK DESIGNATION– Either uses the words “SCAFFOLD PLANK” or an abbreviation (i.e. “Scaff Plank” or “SCF PLK”).



Mandatory Requirements:

- ACCREDITED THIRD-PARTY INSPECTION AGENCY STAMP – This example shows “TP”, one of 17 agencies accredited by ALSC as of January 2025.

A current list of ALSC approved third-party inspection agencies is available at www.saia.org on the “Plank & Platform Council” downloads section.



Non-Mandatory Features

- Edge branding or embossing
- Rods or pins through ends
- Mitered or clipped corners
- End banding
- End and/or edge sealers
- Anti-slip (abraded) surfaces
- Stamped or branded with the word “OSHA” or “OSHA Compliant”
- Note: OSHA does not approve scaffold planks, only an accredited grading/inspection agency can.
- Fire treated for specialty applications

This is NOT a scaffold plank —————→
BSSI is NOT an accredited inspection agency
If there is ever a question with respect to the grade markings,
ask your supplier for a Certification-of-Grade.



Is This Scaffold Plank? —————→

Not necessarily – Just because it says OSHA does NOT mean it is scaffold plank.

- OSHA does not approve scaffold planks
- Look for the grade stamp
- If no grade stamp is visible, consult a qualified or competent person



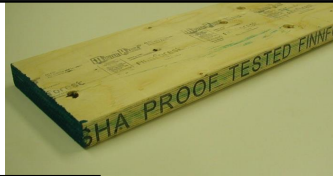
Question: What if I find a plank with multiple grade stamps?

Answer: This should not occur. In the event it does, consult a competent or qualified person.

Engineered Wood Scaffold Planks

Engineered Wood Scaffold Planks Types

- LAMINATED VENEER LUMBER (LVL)
– Most common type of engineered wood plank; uses multiple layers of veneer bonded by adhesive.
- EDGE-LAMINATED LUMBER – vertically laminated wood strips bonded by adhesive
- PIN-CONNECTED PLANK – multiple wood strips mechanically fastened to act as a single member.



Mandatory Requirements:

- MARK OF NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED THIRD-PARTY INSPECTION AGENCY – This example shows “APA”



Mandatory Requirements:

- PRODUCT/MANUFACTURER IDENTIFICATION – This is needed to relate engineered wood planks back to the manufacturer’s literature
- MANUFACTURER LITERATURE – This must provide guidance on spans and loads to meet OSHA /CSA S269.2 safety factor and deflection criteria (OSHA deflection limit is $l/60$, CSA limit is $l/80$).



SAIA recommended identification marks:



- Manufacturer logo or name
- Manufacturing mill number
- "PROOF TESTED" claim
- "SCAFFOLD PLANK" designation or abbreviation (e.g. "SCAFF PLK")
- Production date
- Grade – recommended if manufacturer offers multiple product grades (e.g. 2.1E, 2.3E etc.)

Other optional identification marks:

- Grade – optional if manufacturer only offers one grade (e.g. 2.1E)
- Stamped with the word(s) "OSHA" or "OSHA Compliant"
- Customer specific identification (private emboss)



Non-Mandatory Features

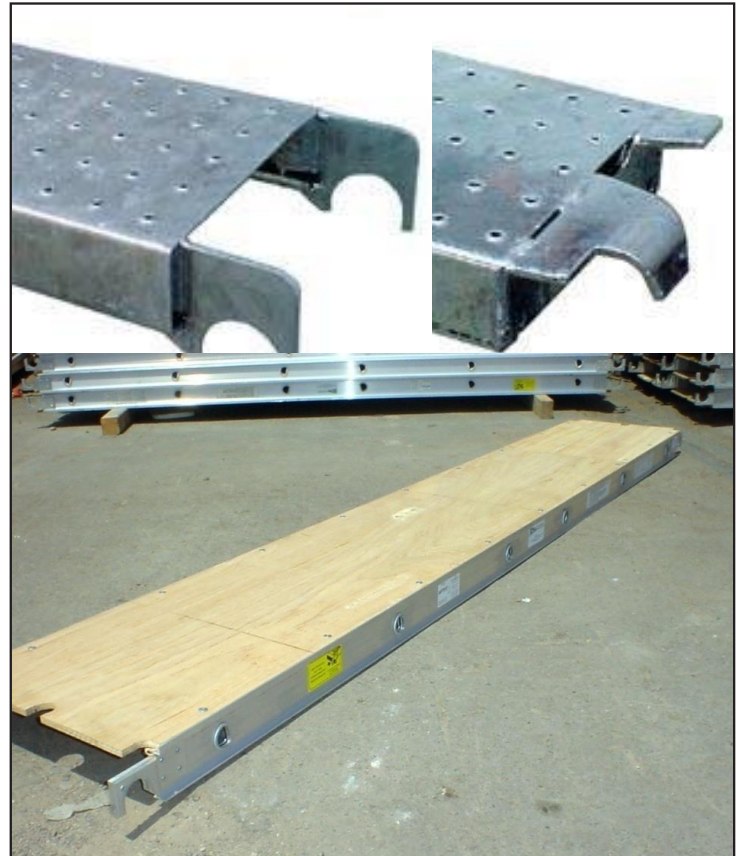
- Edge branding or embossing
- End and/or edge sealers
- End banding
- Edge easing
- Anti-slip (abraded) surfaces
- Fire-treated for specialty applications

Metal Planks & Decks

Metal Plank & Deck Identification

Metal scaffold planks & decks

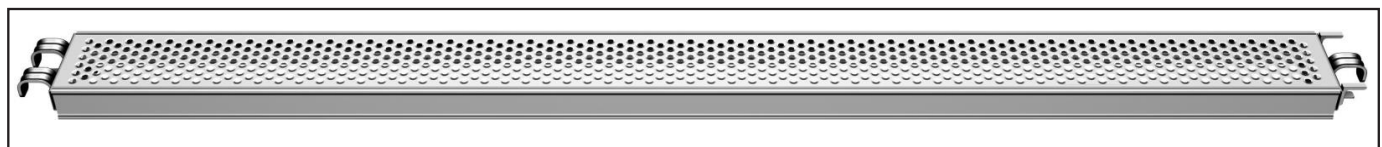
- Comprised of metal rails, metal and/or plywood decks
- Loading capacity rated
- Slip resistant surface – metal planks
- May have hooks for attachment



Non-Hooked Metal Planks

Manufactured of metal with a slip resistant surface Mandatory

- Must incorporate a slip resistant surface
- Must not be less than 6-inches wide nor of a length that would allow use on a single span greater than 10 feet



Steel Planks

Manufactured of steel with hooks and slip resistant surface Mandatory

- Must incorporate a slip resistant surface
- Must have bearer hooks for attachment
- Must not be less than 6-inches wide nor of a length that would allow use on a single span greater than 10 feet

Aluminum Decks

Manufactured of aluminum with hooks and slip resistant surface
Mandatory

- Must incorporate a slip resistant surface
- Must have bearer hooks for attachment
- Commonly 12-inches to 32-inches wide and of a length that would not allow use on a single span greater than 10 feet



Wood Decked Platforms

Manufactured of metal rails with hooks for attachment and plywood decking
Mandatory

- Decking shall be solid-type and fastened to side rails
- Must have bearer hooks for attachment
- Must be marked and identified by rated working load

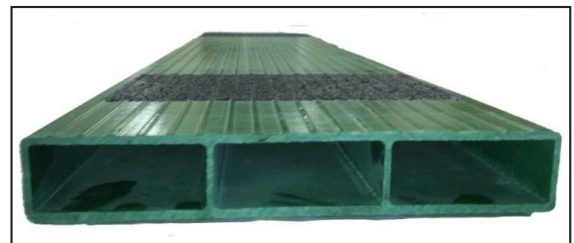


Composite (Fabricated) Planks and Decks

Composite Plank and Deck Identification

Mandatory:

- Must be labeled and the load rating must have a 4 to 1 safety factor
- Must have slip resistant surface



SAIA Recommended Identification Marks:

- Production date
- Proof tested stamp
- "SCAFFOLD PLANK" designation or abbreviation (i.e. "SCAFF PLK")
- Manufactured with UV resistant resin
- Manufactured with Fire Retardant resin
- Manufactured by factory with ISO 9001 Quality Management System

Non-mandatory features:

- 3rd party random sample testing
- Custom colors to match company brand
- End caps
- Stamp or label with the word "OSHA" or "OSHA Compliant"



Inner Access Deck

Inner Access Deck Identification

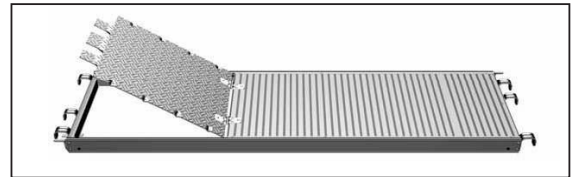
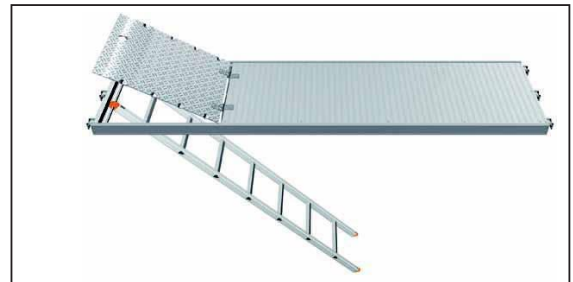
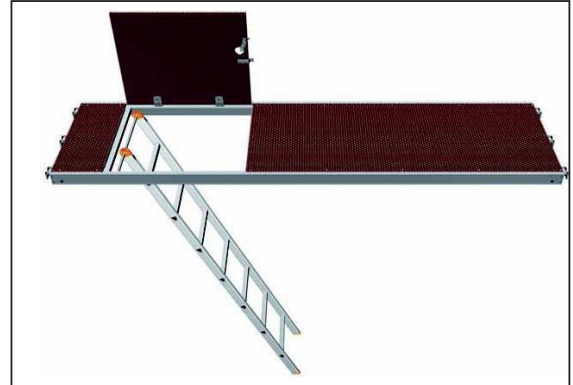
Manufactured of metal rails with hooks for attachment and metal, composite or plywood decking

Mandatory

- Must incorporate a slip resistant surface
- Must have bearer hooks for attachment
- Must be marked and identified by rated working load

Non-Mandatory:

- May have separate or integrated ladder
- May have a hatch for access through the deck
- Manufacturer may be identified on the deck
- May have built-in devices to prevent uplift



Common Types of Damage Found in Scaffold Plank

Types of Damage Commonly Found in Solid Sawn and Engineered Wood Scaffold Plank

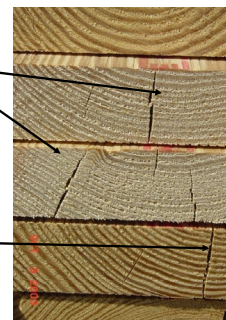
- Splits (end splits, narrow face splits)
- Delamination (applies to engineered wood)
- Handling damage (fork spears, dents, gouges)
- Saw kerfs, notches and holes
- Face breaks

Checking



Checks

Splits



- Checks – Hair-line fiber separation on face or end, where moisture has exited the plank
- ACTION:
NONE. Checks are allowable and unlimited on the surface; if through on the ends they are equivalent to splits.

Splits

There are two types of splits:

- End splits
- Narrow face splits



End Splits

Narrow Face Split

End splits

- Complete separation of the wood – surface-to-surface.
- End splits with length less than or equal to the plank width are repairable; confirm allowable end split length with the accredited inspection agency whose stamp is on the plank as some grading agencies (i.e. PLIB/WCLIB, WWPA, CMSA etc.) limit splits to half the width.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

- Banding may be used to arrest repairable splits from further propagation.
- SEEK THE REVIEW of a Competent Person to determine if plank can be CUT BACK or must be REMOVED FROM SERVICE.

This end split is less than the width of the plank →

POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

- NONE REQUIRED. Split is allowable Note: Some grading rules (i.e. PLIB/WCLIB, WWPA, CMSA etc.) limit a split to half the width of the plank.
- Means may be provided to ARREST SPLIT from further propagation.



Open splits on narrow face of plank – →

Possible internal damage – NOT ALLOWED

ACTION:

- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE.
NOTE: In LVL it is possible to have a slightly indented veneer sheet that resembles a narrow face split. A stiff probe may be used to determine depth of the indent; contact your manufacturer for guidance to distinguish a narrow face split from indented veneer.



Delamination

Delamination is a separation of veneer layers (applicable to laminated engineered wood), and indicates a loss of structural integrity - NOT ALLOWED

ACTION:

- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE
- NOTIFY MANUFACTURER

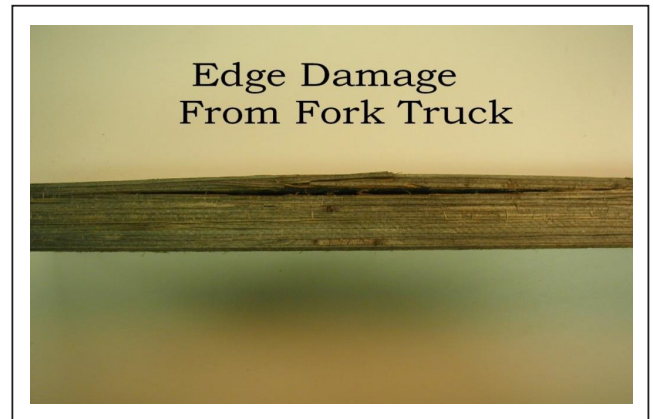


Handling Damage

Localized handling damage can also indicate possible internal damage - NOT ALLOWED

POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE
- SEEK THE REVIEW of a Qualified or Competent Person if further use of the plank is desired



Other Damage

Dents, depression & gouges may be caused by dropped objects, planks or machinery; and may indicate internal damage

ACTION:

- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE
- SEEK THE REVIEW of a Qualified or Competent Person if further use of the plank is desired



Saw Kerfs

Kerfs or cuts result in a reduction of strength – NOT ALLOWED

POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

- CUT BACK to remove defect
- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE

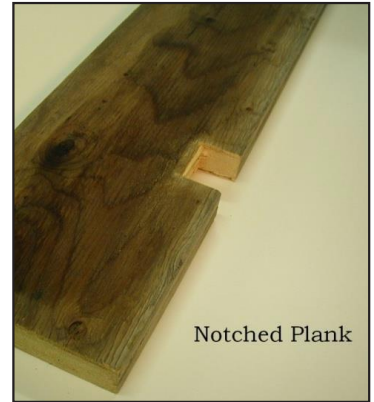


Notches

Notches result in a reduction of strength.
All uses must be at the direction of a qualified person

POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

- CUT BACK to remove defect
- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE
- SEEK THE REVIEW of a Qualified Person if further use of the plank is desired



Face Breaks

Tearing or cracking of wood fiber due to overload or abuse; an indication of structural damage to the plank – NOT ALLOWED

Damage from a break is not always easy to identify and is best observed under load or mechanical evaluation (cracking sounds during loading are audible indicators)

ACTION:

- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE



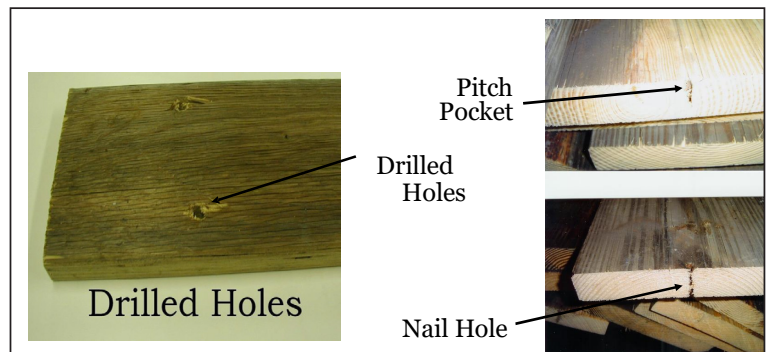
Holes

Pitch & pitch pockets: visible in solid sawn plank – does not compromise structural integrity – ALLOWED, but restricted in many grading rules. Seek the review of a Qualified or Competent Person.

Drill/nail holes – can cause damage due to water penetration, reduced section and possible end splitting. Recommend keeping fasteners back a minimum 6-inches from the end of planks.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

- CUT BACK to remove defect
- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE
- SEEK THE REVIEW of a Qualified Person if further use of the plank is desired



Types of Deformation Found in Solid Sawn and Engineered Wood Scaffold Plank

- Crook
- Cup
- Twist
- Bow

Crook

Crook – deviation edgewise from a straight line end-to-end
Crook can cause gaps in decking surface

POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE
- SEEK THE REVIEW of a Qualified or Competent Person if further use of the plank is desired



Cup

Cup – deviation in the face of a plank edge-to-edge
Can create “rocking” effect or tripping hazard

POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE – store in well stacked area to dry out (cup may be only “temporary” due to moisture on one side of plank).
- SEEK THE REVIEW of a Qualified or Competent Person if cup persists and further use of the plank is desired



Twist

Twist – curl or spiral movement end-to-end or edge-to-edge
Can create “rocking” effect or tripping hazard

ACTION:

- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE
- SEEK THE REVIEW of a Qualified or Competent Person if further use of the plank is desired



Bow

Bow – “ramp effect”; flat-wise deviation
Possible damage due to overloading or excessive moisture in plank

ACTION:

- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE
- SEEK THE REVIEW of a Qualified or Competent Person if further use of the plank is desired



Types of Contamination Found in Solid Sawn and Engineered Wood Scaffold Plank

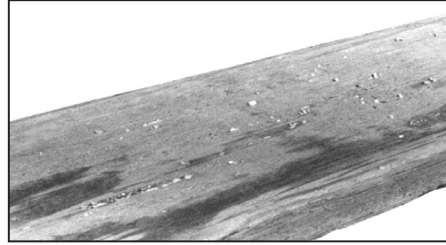
- Chemical
- Fungus
- Decay
- Insect Attack

Chemical Contamination

Usually from acid or alkaline solutions – damage may not be visible
Decrease in plank weight may be symptom of chemical contamination
Wood may appear soft, crumbly or carry odor – NOT ALLOWED.

ACTION:

- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE



Fungus & Decay

Rot is decay of the fiber due to moisture or improper storage & can lead to fungus growth and decrease in plank strength – NOT ALLOWED

ACTION:

- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE

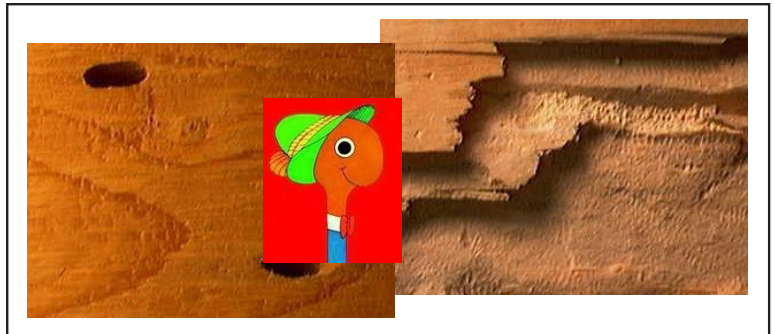


Insect Attack

Insect damage is normally visible, and may compromise plank strength – NOT ALLOWED

ACTION:

- REMOVE PLANK FROM SERVICE



Damage in Metal Planks & Decks and Composite Planks & Decks

Normally damage is visible

Causes:

- Shipping & Handling - i.e. from a forklift
- Erection & Dismantling
- Storage

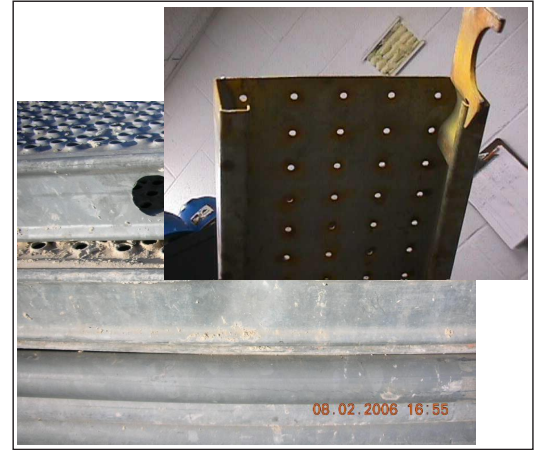


Erection & Dismantling

Dropping a plank or deck can cause significant damage
Any damaged metal plank should be removed from service

ACTION:

- REMOVE FROM SERVICE
- CONTACT THE MANUFACTURER to decide if damage is repairable



Other Causes of Damage

- Overloading
- Rot on plywood decks
- Damaged welds
- Composite planks might contain:
End splits, saw kerfs face splits, holes and chemical contamination

ACTION:

If any signs of these types of damage are present:

- REMOVE FROM SERVICE
- CONTACT THE MANUFACTURER to decide if damage is repairable



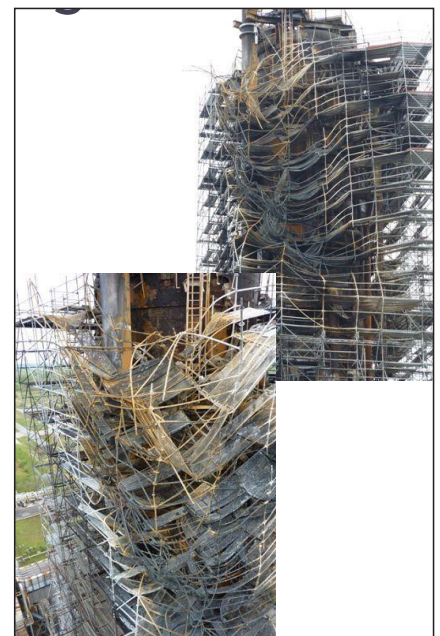
Excessive heat

- Damage may not be visible
- Excessive heat may be exposure to temps in excess of 570 °F (300 °C) for steel planks or 210 °F (100 °C) for aluminum planks
- Note that galvanization may become damaged at temperatures lower than 300 °F (150 °C)

ACTION:

If it is suspected that the product has been exposed to excessive heat:

- REMOVE FROM SERVICE
- CONTACT THE MANUFACTURER to decide if damage is repairable



Rust

- Usually the result of improper storage or chemical/acid attack
- White rust is the first stage of corrosion and appears as a chalking of the zinc layer on galvanized steel.
- Red rust is a latter stage of corrosion and with no attention can compromise the surface.
- Severity can range from an ugly appearance to compromised structural integrity.

ACTION:

- REMOVE FROM SERVICE
- CONTACT THE MANUFACTURER to decide if damage is repairable



Types of Damage in Inner Access Decks

The types of damage described for metal planks in the previous couple of slides are also applicable for inner access decks. In addition to those types listed on the previous slides, the following types of damage may also be seen in inner access decks:

- Damaged hinges
- Hatch does not close or lock properly
- Warped ladder or disfigured ladder rungs
- Broken ladder components

Visual Inspection Process

Solid Sawn & Engineered Wood Scaffold Plank

It is a mandatory requirement to visually inspect scaffold planks before each use.

- Start with a complete visual inspection
- Pull planks one-by-one from plank pile
- Check one side, then turn and check the other
- Check both ends
- Check both edges
- Place each plank in a “Usable” pile (free from all suspected or known defects) or in a “Review” pile (review questionable planks with a competent or qualified person) or in a “Scrap” pile
- Refer to the Solid Sawn Scaffold Plank Handbook or Laminated Veneer Lumber Scaffold Plank Handbook for further information (A current copy of each of the Pocket Handbook Guides is available at www.saia.org in the “Shop SAIA” section.)

Mechanical Evaluation

It is recommended that a mechanical evaluation program be used to supplement (but not replace) routine visual inspection of scaffold planks.

- If done properly, mechanical evaluation can help detect damaged planks that are difficult to visibly detect when not loaded.
- If done improperly, mechanical evaluation can damage planks. DO NOT overload planks or apply impact loads during mechanical evaluation.
- Check with your manufacturer/supplier or the SAIA for guidance on proper mechanical evaluation techniques for your scaffold plank.
- Equipment for automating/aiding in mechanical evaluation is available from some suppliers.



Metal Plank, Deck & Stage Inspection

- Check to see that all hooks are present.
- Check to see that all hooks have their original shape.
- Check to see that the hooks are free of cracks.
- Check to see that all hooks are securely attached.
- Check to see if the deck rails have their original shape throughout their length.
- Check to see if the deck rails are straight.
- Check to see if there are any dents or punctures in the deck rails.
- Check to see if the walking surface is securely attached to the rails.
- If the walking surface is wood, check for cracks or damage on both the top and bottom sides.
- Check to see that all cross-members are present and securely attached.
- If any item noted above is not correct, take appropriate corrective action

Refer to the Metal/Composite Scaffold Platform Handbook for further information (A current copy of each of the Pocket Handbook Guides is available at www.saia.org in the “Shop SAIA” section.)



Visual Inspection Composite Planks & Decks

- Check to see that all hooks are present on decks.
- Check to see that all hooks have their original shape on decks.
- Check to see that the hooks are free of cracks on decks.
- Check to see that all hooks are securely attached on decks.
- Check to see if the plank/deck has its original shape throughout its length.
- Check to see if there are any dents or punctures in the plank/deck.
- If applicable check to see that all cross-members are present and securely attached.
- If any item noted above is not correct, take appropriate corrective action

Refer to the Metal/Composite Scaffold Platform Handbook for further information (A current copy of each of the Pocket Handbook Guides is available at www.saia.org on the “Shop SAIA” section.)



Proper Storage for Scaffold Planks

Scaffold planks should be:

- Stacked on blocking to avoid ground contact
- Stacked neatly in bundles of same length
- Stickered between each row
- Stored under cover (if necessary) with good air circulation



Improper Handling and Misuse The Top 10 “DO NOTs”

DO NOT...

1. Dump planks from trucks or push with the ends of forks
2. Drop, toss or throw planks from scaffold
3. Drop heavy objects on scaffold planks
4. Overload planks
5. Use as loading ramps or walkways through mud
6. Return scaffold plank to service once it is used as a mud sill
7. Jump or bounce on scaffold plank
8. Use in any other way than as scaffold planking
9. Exceed maximum allowable spans
10. Exceed maximum allowable deflection

The Golden Rule

**A Good Rule Of Thumb To Use When Evaluating
The Damage Of Any Scaffold Plank Or Platform Is:**

When In Doubt, Throw It Out!



This document was prepared by members of the Scaffold & Access Industry Association Plank and Platform Council.

This document does not purport to be all-inclusive nor to supplant or replace other additional safety and precautionary measures to cover usual or unusual conditions. If this document conflicts in any way with a state, local, federal, or other government statute or regulation, said statute or regulation shall supersede this document and it shall be the responsibility of each user to comply therewith. This document has been developed as an aid to users of various types of scaffolding equipment. The Scaffold & Access Industry Association and their Council members are not responsible for the use of this document

May 2026 | This document is reviewed periodically. I Check www.saia.org for the latest version