

Dale B. Lindemer, P.E., is the national engineering manager for Safway Services. He is also chair of the Scaffold Section of the Scaffolding, Shoring & Forming Institute (SSFI) and a member of the A10.8 standard subcommittee for scaffolding. In this interview, Lindemer provides his insights on scaffold safety and gives an update on the status of the A10.8 standard's revision.

Please provide a brief description of your professional background and of your positions with SSFI.

I am the national engineering manager for Safway Services in Waukesha, WI as well as chair of SSFI's Scaffold Section. I have been with Safway for 38 years and have been involved with SSFI for about 15 years.

On average, how many of the occupational injuries that occur in the construction industry each year are scaffolding-related? What types of injuries are most common?

Historically, the types of injuries related to scaffolds have been slips and falls, struck by falling objects and platform support giving way.

Do certain types of scaffolding present more safety, health and environmental (SH&E) hazards than others?

Any scaffold that has been properly designed, erected and is used by trained workers will not be more hazardous than any other type. Conversely, any poorly designed and erected scaffold or one used by untrained workers can be hazardous.

In your opinion, what are the key components of an effective scaffolding safety plan?

An effective scaffold safety plan will include an understanding of the ANSI and OSHA scaffold standards. The scaffold must be properly designed by a qualified person, erected by trained erectors under the supervision of a competent person with fully decked work platforms, guardrails and access, inspected prior to each shift by a competent person and used only by trained workers.

How can scaffolding safety best be managed when a construction job includes multiple sites as well as several different types of scaffolding?

Training is the key to ensuring safety. Since there are a variety of different types of scaffolds, erectors and users must be trained on the type of scaffold they will be erecting or using. Different construction sites will also pose different hazards, which will need to be addressed through training.

How can a national voluntary consensus standard, such as "Safety Requirements for Scaffolding" (ANSI/ASSE A10.8-2011), be incorporated on a jobsite to manage scaffolding safety?

The A10.8 scaffold standard establishes safety requirements for scaffolds used in construction, demolition, renovation and maintenance of buildings. The A10.8 standard should be the foundation of a scaffold safety plan.

What is the status of the A10.8 standard?

The revised A10.8 standard received final ANSI approval on August 31, 2011 and is being prepared for publication.

How are fall prevention and personal fall arrest systems used to manage scaffolding safety, and how can these systems work in conjunction with the A10.8 standard?

It is always better to prevent falls than arrest a fall after it happens. By erecting a scaffold with fully decked and guardrailed work platforms in accordance with A10.8, falls will effectively be prevented. In circumstances where this is not possible, then use of a personal fall arrest system can be used. Fall protection for scaffold erectors is a much more complicated issue and is best left to the onsite competent person to evaluate which form of fall protection is best suited to the particular scaffold that will be built. A qualified person may need to assist in developing a fall protection plan that is site specific.

What measures should be taken to protect the public from scaffolding on construction sites?

In general, the public should not be allowed on construction sites. However, many buildings are renovated or maintained while they are occupied so public protection will be important. A public protection canopy is the best solution to guard against falling or dropped material and tools. Local building codes will govern the design and construction of these canopies.

What initiatives does SSFI have planned for improving scaffolding safety in the U.S. in 2011?

SSFI will continue to produce technical bulletins to educate scaffold erectors and users. SSSFI's series of testing standards for scaffold assemblies and components will be updated and expanded periodically. These test standards help the scaffold consumer by assuring that uniform test methods are used within the industry when providing load ratings for scaffolds.

Biography

Dale B. Lindemer, P.E., is the national engineering manager for Safway Services in Waukesha, WI and chair of the Scaffold Section of the Scaffolding, Shoring & Forming Institute (SSFI). He has been with Safway for 38 years and has been involved with SSFI for 15 years. He is a member of the A10.8 standard subcommittee for scaffolding, and he also frequently presents and writes on scaffold safety. Lindemer holds a B.S. from the Milwaukee School of Engineering.