

Scaffolder interview questions

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What to expect

Scaffolder interviews focus on your licence, your safety judgement and your ability to work from plans and specifications. Employers want to know you can erect and dismantle scaffolds safely, inspect them properly, and communicate with other trades on site.

- **Safety and compliance:** Questions about hazard identification, inspections, handover and working to Australian Standards.
- **Technical scaffold knowledge:** Questions about systems, load ratings, ties, bracing and reading design drawings.
- **Process and planning:** Questions about how you sequence an erection or dismantle on different site conditions.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask for a real example of a safety issue, a team conflict or a tight deadline.
- **Scenario and judgement:** Questions that put you in a weather event, a damaged scaffold or an emergency.
- **Licences and tickets:** Questions that confirm your High Risk Work Licence classes, White Card and any relevant tickets.

Typically a phone or video screen with a recruiter, then a site-based interview with a supervisor or safety manager. You may be asked to walk through a scaffold and identify hazards, or complete a short practical assessment. Some employers run a panel with a project manager and WHS officer.

1. Walk me through how you would plan and erect a scaffold on a sloping site.

Why they ask

This tests your technical planning and your ability to think through a sequence before you touch a single standard.

How to structure your answer

A process walk-through: site assessment, design review, permits, material set-out, erection sequence, inspections and handover.

Example answer

"First I would check the site drawings and the scaffold design, if there is one. On a sloping site I would work out the highest and lowest points, then plan the base with adjustable base plates or sole boards to keep the standards plumb. I would confirm the ground bearing capacity with the supervisor and make sure the scaffold is tied to the building as the design requires. After setting out the first bay, I would erect the standards, ledgers and transoms, then install the working decks and guardrails. At each stage I would check alignment with a laser level and complete the inspection checklist before allowing anyone else on it. Finally I would hand over the scaffold with a tag and record the inspection."

2. Tell me about a time you identified a safety issue on a scaffold and what you did.

Why they ask

This is a behavioural question that shows whether you act on hazards or walk past them.

How to structure your answer

STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

“On a commercial site I was doing a daily inspection and noticed a tie had pulled loose on the top lift after a windy night. The scaffold was still in use by renderers. I immediately isolated that section with barrier tape and told the leading hand. I checked the design drawing to confirm the tie spacing, then refitted the tie with a new coupler and checked the neighbouring ties. I recorded the repair in the inspection log and notified the WHS officer. The result was that the section was back in use within the hour and no one was exposed to a fall risk.”

3. What checks do you complete before allowing other trades onto a scaffold you have erected?

Why they ask

This is a technical and compliance question about handover and load ratings.

How to structure your answer

A checklist-style answer: handover certificate, inspection tags, edge protection, ties, loading, access.

Example answer

“Before handover I walk the full scaffold. I check that all ties are in place and secure, that guardrails and mid-rails are at the correct height, and that toe boards are fitted. I check the decking for gaps and that the access ladder or stair is safe. I confirm the scaffold is within its load rating for the intended trade, and that there is no unauthorised loading. I complete the handover certificate and attach a scaffold tag with the inspection date and the person who erected it. I also make sure the trade knows not to alter the scaffold without a scaffolder.”

4. You are working at height and a sudden storm approaches. What do you do?

Why they ask

This is a scenario question about judgement under pressure and safety leadership.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: stop work, secure the scaffold, evacuate, report, then inspect before restart.

Example answer

“I would stop work immediately and tell the crew to come down. I would secure any loose materials, tools and unsecured scaffold components, and make sure the scaffold is tied off as per the design. If there is time I would check that sheets or banners are removed or secured so they do not act as a sail. Then I would evacuate the area and report to the supervisor. After the storm passes I would inspect the scaffold for damage, loose ties or movement before anyone goes back on it. Only after a full inspection and sign-off would work restart.”

5. How do you read and interpret a scaffold design drawing?

Why they ask

This tests your ability to work from plans and specifications, which is core to the role.

How to structure your answer

A walk-through of the drawing elements: title block, plan view, elevations, dimensions, loadings, notes, and cross-checking.

Example answer

“I start with the title block and notes to understand the design criteria and any special requirements. Then I look at the plan view to see the scaffold footprint, the bay sizes and the tie positions. I check the elevations for lifts, working platforms and guardrail heights. I look at the dimensions and the loadings table to know what the scaffold is designed to carry. I also check for details like base plates,

ties, and any bridging or cantilever sections. If anything is unclear I ask the designer or supervisor before I start. I cross-check the drawing against the site conditions and mark up any variations for approval."

6. Describe your experience with different scaffold systems, such as Kwikstage and Layher Allround.

Why they ask

This is a technical question to see how adaptable you are across common modular systems.

How to structure your answer

A comparative answer: system differences, assembly method, ties, compliance, and your hands-on experience.

Example answer

"I have worked with both Kwikstage and Layher Allround. Kwikstage uses wedge connections and rosettes, so it goes up fast for straight runs and is common on housing and commercial sites. Layher Allround is more flexible for complex shapes and can take higher loadings, which suits industrial and infrastructure work. In both systems I focus on the same basics: plumb standards, correct ledger spacing, secure ties, and safe decking. I check the manufacturer's instructions and the design drawing every time. I am comfortable switching between systems and I always complete an inspection before handover."