

Introduction

Regulation 27 of the Management in Construction (Jersey) Regulations 2016 requires the relevant contractor to ensure that, if work at height is carried out, suitable and sufficient measures are taken to prevent any person falling a distance liable to cause personal injury.

Where scaffolding is used, the scaffold, including at the inner face (ie the side nearest to the building or structure), should have no gaps through which persons or materials could fall and cause injury.

To prevent persons and materials falling and causing injury, edge protection in the form of double guard rails and toe boards are required at the outer face and end faces of the scaffold.

Edge protection may also be required at the inner face depending upon an assessment of the 'inside gap' and the work that is needed at the inner face. This article seeks to provide practical guidance on the assessment of the inside gap and the requirement for internal edge protection.

When is edge protection required on the inner face?

1. If the inside gap is less than 225mm (ie less than the width of a scaffold board) and there are no door or window openings in the face of the structure through which a person could fall, edge protection on the inner face is not normally required.
2. If the inside gap is equal to or more than 225mm ($\geq 225\text{mm}$) and a risk assessment identifies a risk of injury but not the risk of a person falling through the gap, a single guard rail will be required as a minimum, along with a safe system of work that includes supervision, training and instruction.
3. If the inside gap is $\geq 225\text{mm}$ and a person could fall through the gap, double guard rails must be installed, unless alternative arrangements are put in place to control the risk of persons falling through the gap.
4. If the inside gap is $\geq 225\text{mm}$ but the installation of complete internal edge protection would impede or prevent work on the face, a safe system of work, determined by risk assessment, may be used in place of some, or all, of the internal protection.

A suitable safe system of work may, for example, include a full body harness and restraint lanyard to prevent the person falling from the inside open edge.

There are now several products on the market designed for use with scaffold boards to ensure that there are no gaps that a person or equipment can fall through.

Irrespective of the width of the inside gap, toe boards may be needed on the inner face for material retention if a risk assessment determines there is a risk of materials falling and injuring persons below.

Further information

Further information is available from the Health and Safety Inspectorate.

The National Access & Scaffolding Confederation (NASC) also produces practical guidance for scaffolding, eg TG20:13 'Operational Guide' and Guidance SG29:17 'Internal edge protection on scaffold platforms', on which this guidance is based.