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Nordic Lam Scaffold Plank Visual Inspection Guide

This technical note is intended to provide a generic, non-exhaustive overview of a particular standards-related topic. This publication does not itself alter or determine compliance responsibilities, which are set forth in CSA S269.2 and CSA Z797.

Use of Scaffold Planks

Scaffold planks must be in good working condition. The proper storage and handling of wood planks can prevent unnecessary damage. Any plank that is suspected to be defective must be replaced immediately.

Safety note: Inspect planks before each use. Do not use damaged planks.

Storage and Handling

Proper storage and handling help protect the planks from damage that may reduce their useful life. To ensure optimal performance and the longevity of the planks, carefully read the following handling and visual inspection instructions. Scaffold planks that have been improperly stored or damaged should be removed from service immediately. Failure to remove improperly stored or damaged planks from service may result in injury or death.

Storage Guidelines:

- Keep scaffold planks dry.
- Store planks in a dry, well-ventilated area. Always allow wet planks to dry quickly by providing proper air circulation.
- Protect planks from extreme weather conditions, including excessive exposure to water.
- Keep planks stacked in bundles off the ground and supported by stickers spaced no more than 8 feet apart between each layer. Be sure to line up the stickers between bundles with the ground stickers.
- Do not store heavy objects on the planks.

Handling Guidelines:

- Do not overload the planks; refer to the span charts for loading capacity. Immediately remove planks that have been overloaded from service and visually inspect prior to reusing.
- Throwing planks from scaffolding may cause damage. A thrown plank should be inspected and evaluated before reuse.
- Do not push or hit bundles of scaffold planks with the fork ends. Stickers should be of thick enough material to allow forklift handling without causing damage to the planks.
- Do not expose scaffold planks to oxidizing chemicals.
- Do not jump or bounce on the planks; avoid dropping heavy objects on the planks.

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Visual Inspection

Scaffold planks shall be inspected for visible defects by a competent person before each work shift and after any occurrence that could affect the structural integrity. Any scaffold plank damaged or weakened such that its strength is less than that required shall be immediately replaced.

A competent person is defined by CSA Z797 as a person who by knowledge, training, and experience is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions that are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous and who has the authority to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate such hazards.

A visual inspection should look for any signs of damage, including, but not limited to:

Dents, gouges and depressions – Reflect internal structural damage (corresponding to a reduced load carrying capacity) and may be caused due to impact from a heavy object or if a plank is dropped.

Face breaks – Tears or cracks across the top or bottom surface (face) of the plank usually due to overloading or mishandling. They are indicative of structural damage to the plank (greatly reducing its load carrying capacity).

End split – A separation of the wood extending the length of the plank from the top surface to the bottom surface.

Edge (narrow face) split – An open split consisting of a separation of the wood on the narrow edge of the plank. Usually occurs from damage due to localized handling (such as forklifting or overloading).

Delamination – A separation of lamellas and reflects a loss of load carrying capacity.

Saw cuts – Sawn cuts lead to a reduced load carrying capacity in the plank and are not permitted.

Drilled holes or notches – Drilled holes or notches reduce the planks load carrying capacity.

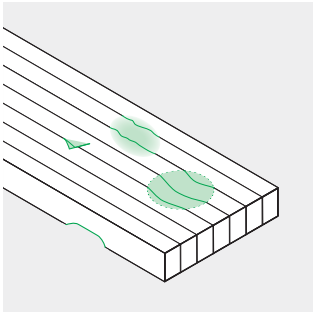
Decay – Rotting that may occur due to moisture or improper storage.

Insect damage – Is usually visible and compromises the plank's load carrying capacity.

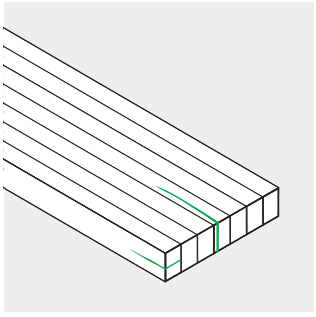
Discoloration, soft wood and/or odor – Wood appearing soft (spongey or crumbly), or with discoloration and/or carrying an odor may be indicative of chemical contamination or decay.

Crooking, cupping, twisting and bowing – A plank that has deformed in its shape (for example due to moisture or overloading).

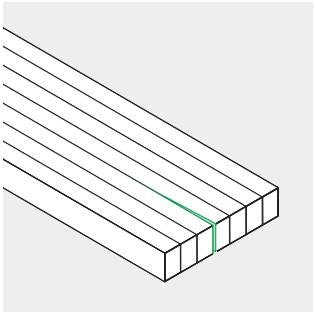
Important: In each of the above cases, planks should be immediately removed from service. Failure to do so may result in injury or death. Visual inspections along with proper use, handling and storage ensure safe performance of Nordic Lam Scaffold Planks.



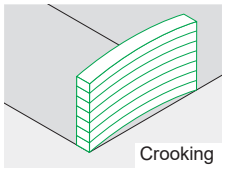
Dents, Gouges, Depressions, and Face Breaks



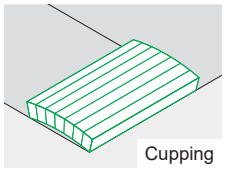
End Split and Edge Split



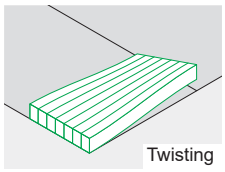
Delamination



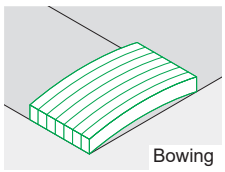
Crooking



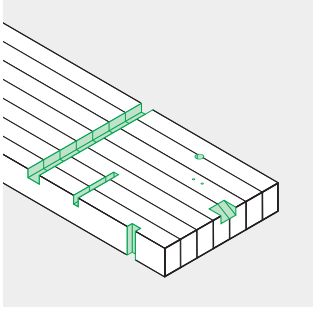
Cupping



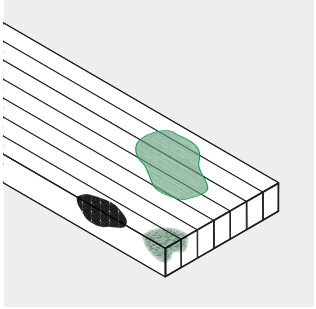
Twisting



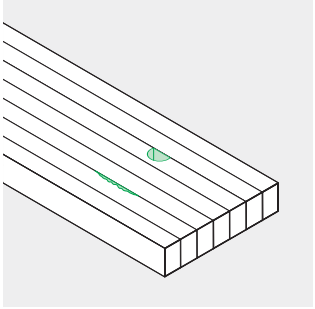
Bowing



Saw Cuts, Drilled Holes, and Notches



Decay, Insect Damage, Discoloration, Soft Wood and/or Odor



Loose Knots and Wane

References:

1. CSA S269.2. Access scaffolding for construction purposes.
2. CSA Z797. Code of practice for access scaffold.
3. Scaffold and Access Industry Association (SAIA). Plank and Platform Inspection Guidelines.

For more technical information on design values, refer to the APA Product Report PR-L317C.