

ULTRA ACCESS Take 5 Check 5

Fulfilling your minimum obligation under “Duty of Care”

Scaffolding is a high risk activity, either for the operatives themselves - and depending on the kind of scaffolding works carried out - potentially for others also.

Regardless of how ambiguous some of the language used within Health and Safety is (and deliberately so), one phrase that we constantly refer back to, which is a clear as day is:

DUTY OF CARE.

What is “duty of care”?

... It's the unbreakable promise you owe everyone - your colleagues at work, other contractors or the general public who could be affected by your actions, your employers / employees and even yourself.

Literally embedded into the **Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974**: (paraphrasing) that everyone at work as a moral and legal obligation to ensure that their actions whilst carrying out their task does not endanger themselves or others, and is managed as far as reasonably practicable.

“**Reasonably Practicable Duty of Care**” means balancing risks, costs, time, and common sense factors.

And with everyone having a duty of care responsibility - this is where **Take 5 Check 5** comes in to play...

Before sticking a Base Plate on the ground, please consider taking 5 minutes, to check the following 5 things (in no particular order):

- **Does the Compliance Sheet or (more importantly) the Scaffold Design work...?** Are there considerably deviations required that you might not have the tools, materials, or safety equipment to do safely and effectively? And if deviations do occur, do you understand that you have a duty to inform your line management, ie: Supervisor, for them to inform the Scaffold Design Engineer...?
- **Despite having RAMS, have you done a safety spot-check of the work area?** ... to make sure that you are not putting yourself, your colleagues and others in danger by the nature of your work being carried out... - this would include where your materials are located.
- **Are your colleagues all physically (and mentally) fit enough to carry out the dangerous and rigorous work for the duration of the shift..?** are they showing signs of mental distress, injury, or under the influence of controlled substances that could pose a risk...?
- **Have you checked your PPE, tools and equipment, before using them?** ... and relying on them to work when required? A simple visual check of your PPE, especially your Safety Harnesses (and Attachment type) would be especially sensible before each use.
- **Is the scaffold in the right location, and suitable for the purpose...?** Mistakes do happen, and this could lead to potentially serious safety and financial issues, that could have a knock-on effect.

If you **Take 5 Check 5**, it would help proactively to mitigate any unforeseen issues, as well as show that you have done everything that's considered “reasonably practicable” to follow your moral and legal obligations to “duty of care”...

... as well as demonstrate your professionalism, to others whilst at work.

It's a concept that **ULTRA ACCESS** has been using for a while now, and it's been a resounding success in spotting issues before it's too late to rectify them.