



SUSPENDED SCAFFOLDING SECTION

SSFI TECHNICAL BULLETIN

The ANSI/UL 1323 Standard: Can You Rely on Your Hoist?

Suspended scaffold hoists are obviously a critical component of a suspended scaffold system. As such, manufacturers are required by OSHA to have their hoists tested by a qualified testing laboratory. But what does this mean, and what should you look for when you are considering using or buying a hoist?

According to OSHA, a qualified testing laboratory is intended to mean a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL). These are specialized testing facilities that are accredited by one of various organizations, such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology's National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NAVLAP) or the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA). The accrediting bodies establish guidelines for items such as test procedures, test equipment, calibration processes, etc. Be certain that any hoist you use or buy has been tested and rated by an NRTL and is labeled with the NRTL's mark. Some well-known NRTLs that conduct tests of scaffold hoists are UL and ETL.

Purchasing a hoist with an NRTL's mark or label ensures you have a hoist that's operation and compliance with OSHA's directive has been verified by a credible, independent third party. It also assures you that repeat purchases will continue to meet the OSHA standards. NRTLs continue to audit production at least quarterly to verify that a manufacturer's ongoing production and improvement efforts continue to meet the OSHA standard.

In addition to knowing who conducted the test, be certain that you know which tests were conducted. All scaffold hoists used in the United States should comply with the American National Standard for Scaffold Hoists, ANSI/UL 1323. This standard provides nationally accepted test procedures that are designed to rigorously test a scaffold hoist.

Accurate ratings are essential to proper use of scaffold hoists and suspended scaffolds. If you do not know who conducted the tests on your scaffold hoists, or if your scaffold hoists were not tested to the ANSI/UL 1323 standard, you are engaging in risky behavior that could endanger your life, or the lives of your employees.

In an era when employers supplying defective or improperly installed equipment are facing criminal prosecutions, the consequences of buying a hoist that has not been tested by an NRTL to the ANSI/UL 1323 standard are significant. Manufacturers' credentials are available on most NRTL's websites for easy verification of manufacturers' claims, and all reputable hoist manufacturers will be able to tell you the standards and test labs that they use to rate their products. Ask them. If your supplier does not know, or is not willing to tell you, look elsewhere to source your equipment.

This Technical Bulletin was prepared by members of the SSFI Suspended Scaffolding Section.

SSFI is a trade association comprising manufacturers of shoring, scaffolding, forming, and suspended scaffolding. The institute focuses on engineering and safety aspects of scope products.

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