

MAY 2010

# scaffold INDUSTRY

ELEVATING THE STANDARD OF PRACTICE IN THE SCAFFOLD AND ACCESS INDUSTRY

## Proof Tested Scaffold Plank

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With lives on the line, steps should be taken to understand specific plank and platform guidelines.





# KD, MC, DI65, 171B, SYP, DF, TP...SHALL I GO ON?

By Colby Hubler

# beyond the grade

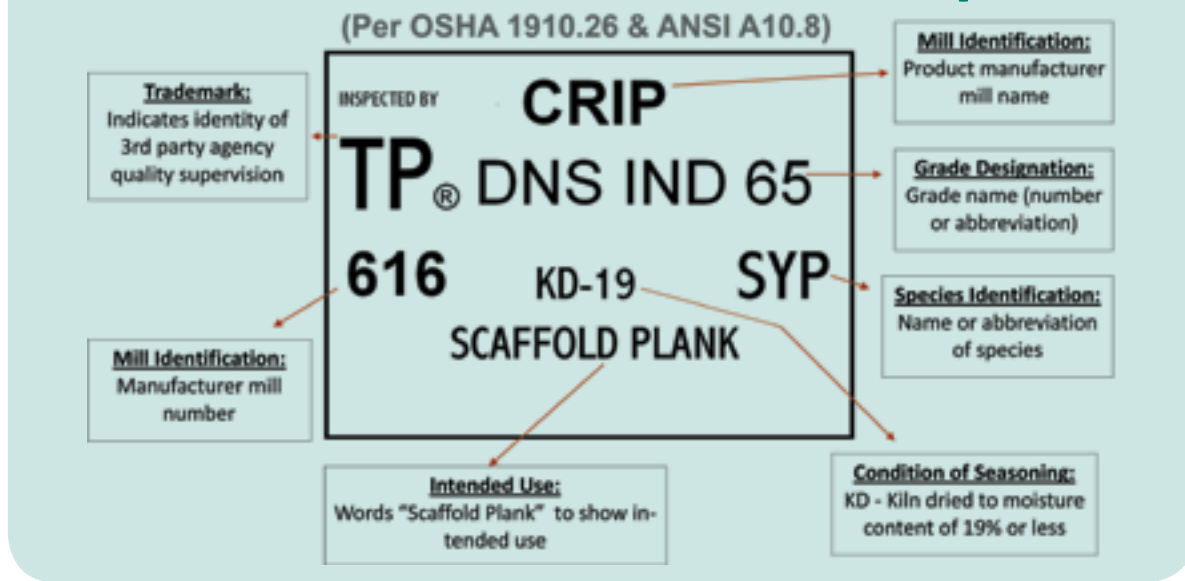
The world of solid sawn scaffold plank is filled with acronyms and information that can overwhelm anyone in our industry. However, as a buyer of scaffold plank, it is this exact information needed to verify the grade and develop purchasing confidence. To understand it, we need to ask a few questions: what exactly is the scaffold grade, what do we look for and why is it important?

First, we need to start with OSHA and ANSI. OSHA says if we are using the lumber as scaffold plank, it must meet the design criteria or grade as established by an approved grading agency. It is more clearly defined in ANSI A10.8-2001 5.2.4 - "All solid sawn wood planks shall be rated as scaffold plank grade and shall be certified by, or bear the grade stamp of, a grading agency approved by the American Lumber Standards Committee." Great, you say, what does that mean?

The American Lumber Standards Committee (ALSC) is an organization made up of manufacturers, distributors and users that serve as a standing committee for administering an accreditation program for the grade marking of lumber produced in North America. The ALSC authorizes accredited independent third party agencies (e.g. the Southern Yellow Pine Inspection Bureau (SPIB), Timber Products (TP) or West Coast Lumber Inspection Bureau (WCLIB) to operate under a set of grading rules for certain lumber products; Dense Industrial 65 Southern Yellow Pine Scaffold Plank being one such set of rules.

Solid sawn scaffold plank producing facilities, once approved to grade and stamp product as scaffold plank, are required to follow these grading rules as a minimum. The third

# Required Markings for ALL Solid Sawn Scaffold Plank Grade Stamps



party inspection agency (e.g. TP) audits the manufacturer's production process to verify the minimum grade requirements are being met. The audit can occur monthly, quarterly or on an annual basis depending on the specific agency. It is imperative that the manufacturer has an ongoing quality control process in place to monitor grade compliance, so on "non-audited" days, corners are not being cut in the grading process and safety is not compromised. For such a liable product, "pushed" (borderline) grades or grading errors should not occur. Buyers of scaffold plank should never have to deal with that kind of malice and lack of responsibility from a manufacturer/supplier. Unfortunately, it exists in our marketplace today.

The American Lumber Standards Committee has qualified the third party inspection agency. The third party inspection agency is auditing the manufacturer and the manufacturer is grading and stamping every scaffold plank with the proper information. What do we look for next?

Above is a grade stamp for Southern Yellow Pine DI65 Scaffold Plank. Every plank you receive from your supplier must have the grade stamp on the face of the plank with the following information:

- Mill Identification: The product manufacturer mill name (e.g. CRIP).
- Grade Designation: This will be the technical grade name for scaffold plank (e.g. DNS IND 65).
- Species Identification: What kind of wood is it? (e.g. SYP for Southern Yellow Pine).

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- Condition of Seasoning: DI65 scaffold plank is required to be Kiln Dried (KD) to moisture content (MC) of 19 percent or less (e.g. KD-19).
- Intended Use: This is not mudsill. This is not construction lumber. This is scaffold plank and every stamp should show this. Vice versa, it is not allowable to use material for scaffold plank that does not show the intended use.

- Inspection Agency Trademark: Indicates identity of the third party agency auditing the mill listed on the stamp (e.g. TP – Timber Products Inspections).
- Mill Identification: Usually in the form of an assigned number (e.g. 616). The mill number is important when used to identify and track through the inspection agency.

Eventually, the grade stamp will wear off or get covered by mortar, plaster or chemicals. It is under these circumstances that many manufacturers have added additional

features to help identify and promote the safety of solid sawn scaffold plank:

- Embossing on the edges of the plank to verify the manufacturer is in conformance to the required standards as well as identify ownership and production information. Additionally, it disallows non-branded lumber, which is not plank, to enter a scaffold plank inventory in the field.
- Rodding: This is an insertion of a metal rod into the end of the plank to help stop end splits from traveling beyond the allowable length.
- Clipping/Mitering: A 45-degree cut on corners of plank to help stop end shear and assist in ease of handling.



- End Sealing: This is an important step in providing longer life to planks and is often overlooked. End sealing will help stop moisture from entering the end grain of plank and causing degradation.
- Traction: Anti-slip surfaces are becoming commonplace, especially for industrial applications where many plant safety managers are specifying it.
- Proof Loading: Not required, but a valued step in addition to visual grading that some manufacturers are employing to verify deflection and design values.

The Scaffold Industry Association Plank and Platform Council has developed many tools to assist buyers in identifying and inspecting solid sawn scaffold plank to confirm the validity of grade. These resources can be found online through the SIA website at [www.scaffold.org](http://www.scaffold.org):

- Plank Identification and Inspection Training CD: A complete overview of all types of planks, identifying grades/qualities and field inspection techniques.
- A Pocket Handbook Guide on Solid Sawn Wood Scaffold Plank: A field guide to identify plank markings, action items on damage and safety and handling references.
- Purchasing Guidelines for Solid Sawn Scaffold Plank: A checklist for buyers of scaffold plank to create a dialogue with their plank supplier. This guideline will assist buyers in making sure they are purchasing from a legitimate manufacturer/supplier, that the manufacturer/supplier is



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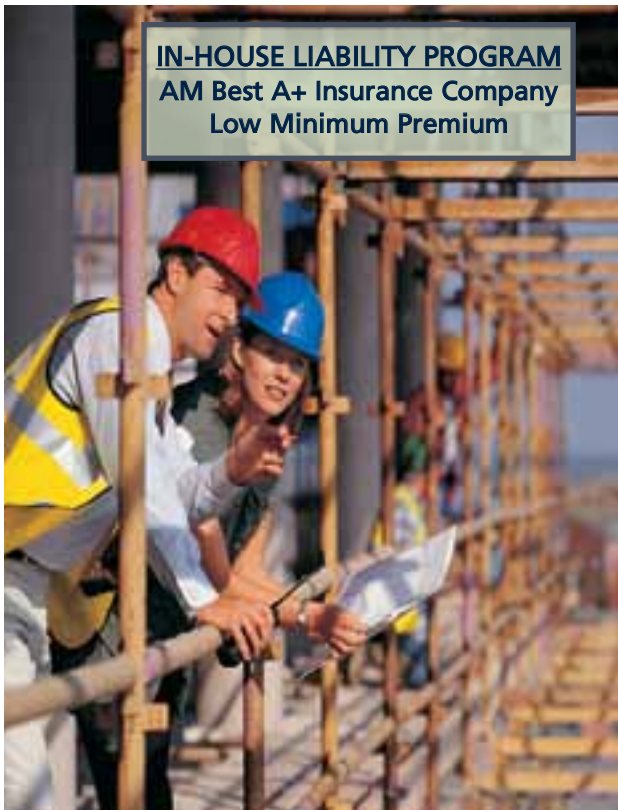
following the proper grading protocol and that the manufacturer/supplier can support their product through technical resources and field support.

The bottom line is to be able to identify solid sawn scaffold planks that exceed the required standards and provide the safest uniform walking surface for our industry. Safety = A responsibility of every manufacturer and buyer of scaffold plank to protect our customers and scaffold teams from stepping on a faulty plank.

- Ask your supplier for certificate of grade showing every piece of plank you receive from them IS scaffold plank.
- Ask your supplier for a certificate of insurance.
- Ask your supplier for information on their quality control process.
- If you have additional questions about solid sawn plank in your inventory, on a job or before your purchase, ask your supplier for/ check the grade stamp and contact the third party inspection agency assigned to the mill. Third party agencies provide onsite unbiased re-grading of material in question amongst other services.
- Please contact the SIA Plank and Platform Council for a list of Accreditation Agencies and third party inspection agencies.

#### About the Author

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