Temporary Works Toolbox Talk

Key points, do's and don'ts, and questions with answers. The attendance sign-off sheet is on the last page.

Asked to show your toolbox talk records? The Site Book keeps each talk and its signatures with the job, on Pro: **thesitebook.co.uk/features/toolbox-talks**

Key points to cover

- All temporary works must be designed by a competent person and the design checked before loading — by an independent engineer where the works are complex
- A Temporary Works Coordinator (TWC) must be appointed for the project to manage the temporary works register and procedures
- No temporary works may be loaded until the TWC has confirmed the design check is complete and issued a permit to load
- Temporary works must not be struck (removed) without a formal permit to strike issued by the TWC
- Premature removal of props, formwork, or shoring is one of the most common causes of structural collapse on site
- All temporary works must be regularly inspected by a competent person, with records maintained
- Changes to the permanent works design can affect temporary works — always check with the TWC before proceeding

Do's and don'ts

Do

- Follow the TWC procedures and permit system for every temporary works operation
- Check that props, shores, and braces are installed in accordance with the design drawings before loading
- Report any damage, movement, deformation, or unusual noises in temporary works immediately
- Ensure foundations and bearing surfaces for temporary works are adequate — check for soft ground, voids, and drainage issues
- Keep temporary works clean and free from debris that could obstruct inspection or affect stability

Don't

- Never remove props or formwork before the permit to strike has been issued by the TWC
- Never use temporary works components that are damaged, corroded, or not fit for purpose
- Never exceed the design load on formwork, falsework, or propping — do not stack materials without checking
- Never bypass the temporary works register — every item must be recorded, designed, checked, and managed
- Never assume that temporary works are someone else's responsibility — everyone on site has a duty to report concerns

Questions to check understanding

Ask each question and let the crew answer before you read out the answer.

Q1. What is a Temporary Works Coordinator and why is the role essential?

Answer: A Temporary Works Coordinator (TWC) is a competent person appointed to manage all temporary works on a project. Their role includes maintaining the temporary works register, ensuring designs are checked (by an independent engineer where the works are complex), issuing permits to load and strike, and arranging inspections. BS 5975-1:2024 and the Temporary Works Forum (TWf) recommend the TWC role on all projects involving temporary works. Without a TWC, there is no formal control over what is installed, when it is loaded, and when it is removed — which is when collapses occur.

Q2. What is a permit to load and a permit to strike?

Answer: A permit to load is a formal written authorisation from the TWC confirming that a temporary works item has been designed, checked, installed correctly, and is safe to receive its intended load (e.g. pouring concrete onto formwork). A permit to strike is a formal written authorisation to remove the temporary works, confirming that the permanent structure has gained sufficient strength and the temporary support is no longer required. Both permits are critical safety controls — loading or striking without them is a common cause of collapse.

Q3. What are the most common causes of temporary works failures?

Answer: HSE investigations into temporary works collapses consistently identify the same causes: no formal TWC system in place, designs not independently checked, inadequate foundations or bearing surfaces for props, premature striking of formwork before concrete has reached design strength, overloading of falsework and formwork, and failure to inspect temporary works regularly. The Temporary Works Forum guidance emphasises that almost all failures are due to management failings, not material defects.

Attendance sign-off sheet: Temporary Works Toolbox Talk

Everyone who attended prints their name and signs to confirm they received this talk.

Date _____ **Time** _____

Site or location _____ **Presented by** _____

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This is general guidance for UK construction sites. Check it against your own risk assessment, method statement and the site before you deliver it. Toolbox talk from The Site Book, reviewed 26 October 2026. Read it online at thesitebook.co.uk/toolbox-talks/temporary-works.