

Safety and health alert

08/06 Worker fatally injured after falling through a roof

Incident

A roof worker was fatally injured after he fell approximately 6.5 metres through a hole in a steel (Trimdeck) roof at an unoccupied factory unit. The deceased was in the process of fixing a hole in the roof that was left by the previous tenants of the factory unit. There were no fall prevention systems in place.

Contrary to the manufacturer's instructions, the deceased was using a scissor lift to gain access onto the roof through the hole. Both the deceased and his assistant climbed out of the scissor lift from below, through the hole in the roof to gain access to the roof area.

To repair the hole in the roof, the hole was made larger, leaving a large space between the scissor lift and the unprotected edges.

While working on the roof, the deceased fell through the hole, past the scissor lift and landed on the concrete floor approximately 6.5 metres underneath, sustaining fatal injuries.

Factors to consider

- There was no fall injury prevention system in use at the time of the incident.
- The two workers climbed out of the scissor lift and onto the roof in contravention of the manufacturer's instructions for the use of the scissor lift.
- The increased hole size was greater than the scissor lift (working or catch) platform.

Recommendations

1. Operators of elevating work platforms such as scissor lifts must ensure they comply with the written instructions of the manufacturer of the machine, or are in accordance with Australian Standard *AS2550.10 – Cranes Safe Use - Elevating Work Platforms* where these instructions are not available.
2. Where work at heights is to be carried out, refer to the Commission for Occupational Safety and Health Code of Practice – Prevention of Falls at Workplaces for guidance on safe systems of work.

Further information

- Written instructions from the manufacturer of machine in use.
- Australian Standard *AS2550.10 – Cranes Safe Use - Elevating Work Platforms*.
- Commission for Occupational Safety and Health Code of Practice – Prevention of Falls at Workplaces (2004).

A412515

Date: October 2006

