

Safety and health alert

16/ 2007 Modular scaffold collapse

Incident

A young man was injured when the modular scaffold he was dismantling collapsed. The scaffold was approximately 5 metres high and 1 bay wide. The young man who was dismantling the scaffold was employed as a scaffolding labourer and held no qualifications. He had been working as a scaffolding labourer for approximately 8 months. During the dismantling process, there was a certified scaffolder on site, although he was not in direct supervision of the worker. An inspection of the scaffold was not carried out before the work commenced. The young worker had dismantled the scaffold down to the first lift, and when he removed a ledger from the scaffold it gave a sudden jerk sideways and collapsed.

Factors to consider

- The scaffold was five metres high.
- There was no direct supervision of the worker who only had minimal experience.
- The labourer held no Certificate of Competency or Licence for High Risk Work.
- The scaffold was not inspected before dismantling commenced.

Recommendations

1. Inspect the scaffold and conduct a risk assessment prior to the commencement of the dismantling process.
2. Only persons who hold a current Certificate of Competency or a Licence for High Risk Work can erect or dismantle any scaffold over the height of 4 metres.
3. Ensure that all scaffolds are erected and dismantled in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
5. Scaffolding on construction sites should not be modified in any way unless directed by the main contractor.

Further information

- Australian/New Zealand Standards AS/NZS 1576 Parts 1-6.
- AS/NZS 4576:1995- Guidelines for Scaffolding.

Further information can be obtained from WorkSafe's internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email safety@docep.wa.gov.au

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