

15/01/2019

Fatality

- **Incident date:** 17/11/2018
- **Event:** Fall from heights through open penetration/void
- **Location:** Green Valley

Incident Overview

A 29-year-old male air conditioning mechanic fell from the first floor of a residential construction site through a stair void. The worker suffered fatal head and neck injuries.



Image: View of the stair void and access stairs.

The site

The site is located at Green Valley. Activities undertaken at the site include the construction of a two-story residence.

The investigation

- ☒ SafeWork NSW Inspectors responded to the incident.
- ☒ SafeWork NSW has commenced an investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident.

Our [Prosecution Guidelines \(January 2018\)](#) outline our approach to prosecutions and Safe Work Australia's [National Compliance and Enforcement Policy](#) provides guidance on our approach to compliance. These documents set out factors that will be considered in determining the investigative approach and appropriate outcome.

Safety Information

Businesses are reminded of their duty to identify hazards and manage risks to health and safety in accordance with the provisions of the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) and [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#).

Each year SafeWork NSW respond to incidents where workers have been killed or seriously injured from falls from heights. Many of these incidents involve falling through penetrations.

Workers in the construction industry are most commonly injured from falling; however, any worker, working at height is at risk.

Businesses are reminded to consider reasonably practicable control measures to manage the risk of falls.

Before commencing work a business must:

- provide edge protection on all open edges where a worker can fall e.g. guardrails comprising top-rail, mid-rail and toe boards.
- cover stair voids with covers designed to withstand likely impact and static loads and fixed to prevent any dislodgement or accidental removal.
- provide workers with safe means of access and egress to work areas.

Further information

Please refer to the following guidance materials:

- [Managing the risk of falls at workplaces COP](#)
- [Preventing falls in housing construction COP](#)
- [SafeWork Pocket Guide to Construction Safety](#)

About this information release

We have issued this information to draw attention to the occurrence of a fatality in the Construction industry. Investigations are ongoing and further information may be published as it becomes available.

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. Users are reminded of the need to ensure any information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate SafeWork NSW officer or the user's independent adviser. No conclusions should be drawn from the information in this publication about the cause of the incident or the culpability of any party.

All photographs were taken by SafeWork NSW.