

2/05/2022

Fall from scaffold on slipway

12 November 2021

A 67-year-old worker performing repairs and maintenance to a vessel has fallen from bracket scaffolding on a slipway in Ulladulla. The worker removed a timber scaffolding plank before falling approximately three to four metres to the concrete ground below. As a result of the incident the worker sustained foot, leg, hip and spinal fractures.



Incident location on slipway

Safety information

Tasks undertaken by marine businesses can involve working at heights to access the hull and topsides of vessels. Much of this work is done on temporary work platforms when the vessels are on slipways or on exposed or covered hardstand areas. Consider 'reasonably practicable' control measures to manage the risks associated with working at heights and temporary work platforms.

Fall prevention

Employers must consult with other duty holders and manage the risk of falls at the workplace by working from the ground or solid construction. If this is not possible, consider using fall prevention devices, a work positioning system or fall arrest system.

Fall protection devices

Fall prevention devices include fencing, edge protection, covers, scaffolds, elevating work platforms, work boxes and other temporary work platforms. Such devices should always be installed and used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing and the findings are not yet confirmed. SafeWork NSW has commenced an investigation in response to the incident to determine its cause and circumstances. No conclusions should be drawn from the information in this publication about the cause of the incident or the culpability of any party.

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Employers must ensure:

- scaffolding includes edge protection if:
 - a person could fall more than two metres, or
 - if a fall of less than two metres is reasonably likely to cause injury
- scaffolding where a person could fall more than four metres must be erected by a licenced scaffolder and have a valid handover certificate
- work positioning systems include industrial rope access or a restraint system that stops a worker reaching a position where they could fall
- falls arrest systems includes catch nets and harness-based fall arrest systems - such systems should only be used by workers with suitable training and a rescue plan to retrieve a fallen worker is required
- other measures to control the risk of falls are in place, including having safe systems of work (Safe Work Method Statements) and adequate training/supervision of workers.

Related information

- [Managing the risk of falls at Workplaces – Code of Practice SafeWork NSW](#)
- [Managing risks in stevedoring - Code of Practice](#)
- [Tower and mobile scaffolding information sheet – SafeWork Australia](#)
- [Working at heights – SafeWork NSW](#)
- [Scaffolding - SafeWork NSW](#)
- [Develop Workplace Health & Safety Guidance for Recreational & Light Commercial Boating Industries – Boating Industry Association NSW](#)

View the latest incident information releases at safework.nsw.gov.au