

10/01/2019

Serious Injury

- **Incident date:** 11/09/2018
- **Event:** Fall through penetration
- **Location:** Castle Hill

Incident Overview

A 28-year-old bricklayer was undertaking work in a plant room of a major tunnel and civil infrastructure works project. He stood on the temporary platform covering a penetration which has shifted under his weight causing him to fall 7.1 metres to the concourse level below. The worker sustained a broken left femur, tibia, fibula and a broken left shoulder.

SafeWork NSW and NSW Ambulance responded to the incident and the worker was conveyed to hospital and received treatment for his injuries.



Image 1 & 2. View of open penetration from the plant room where the worker has fallen through and view from the level below looking up at the opening.

The site

The site is located at Castle Hill. Activities undertaken at the site include the construction of twin tunnels that will form part of the Sydney Metro Northwest automated rail system. The site is under the control of a principal contractor that is under the Comcare scheme with multiple sub-contractors working onsite. The worker was an employee of a NSW bricklaying company subcontracted to undertake the bricklaying works.

The investigation

SafeWork NSW Inspectors responded to 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 their approach to compliance. These documents set out factors that will be considered in determining the investigative approach and appropriate outcome.

Safety Information

Businesses and workers 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 a height. Many of these incidents involve falling through a penetration.

Workers in the Construction Industry are commonly at risk of falling from height; however, any worker working at height is at risk of falling.

Businesses are reminded to consider reasonably practicable control measures to manage the risk of falling from heights and working near penetrations including;

- Installing barriers, such as guard rails or covers, that are secured and labelled with warning signs in areas where penetrations are present
- Covering and marking, or installing guardrails around penetrations/voids
- Providing workers with safe means of access and egress to work areas
- Conducting a risk assessment prior to working near penetrations

Further information

Please refer to the following guidance materials:

- [Managing the Risk of falls at Workplaces - Code of Practice](#)
- [Trapdoors and Penetration Covers in Construction](#) (QLD Safety Alert)
- [Prosecution results following Construction falls](#)
- [SafeWork NSW guide to working safely at heights](#)
- [Construction work code of practice 2014](#)

About this information release

We have issued this information to draw attention to the occurrence of a serious injury 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.