

6/12/2018

## Serious Incident

- **Incident date:** 7/09/2018
- **Event:** Scaffold Collapse
- **Location:** Bronte

### Incident Overview

Partially dismantled 4-storey scaffolding on a multi-story residential construction site in Bronte has fallen away from the building and onto the neighbouring unit complex.

No residents were in the neighbouring property at the time of the incident. There were no injuries reported.

The residents were provided with temporary accommodation and a section of the road was closed while repair work occur.

SafeWork NSW, NSW Police and the State Emergency Services responded to the incident and Engineers were on site to make the site safe.



View of the 4-storey scaffolding which has collapsed and fallen onto a neighbouring property

## The site

The site is located at Bronte. Activities undertaken at the site include the dismantling of scaffolding. The site is under the control of a principal contractor with the activity being undertaken by a sub-contractor.

## 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 their 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 the safety of workers, or nearby people, has been at risk from falling scaffolding.

Many of these incidents involve scaffolds with containment sheeting (eg shadecloth or mesh) which may place extra weight on a scaffold, particularly in bad weather when wind and rain can place additional live loads the materials.

A scaffold collapse not only puts workers lives at risk, but puts the public at significant risk of being hit by falling objects.

Businesses are reminded to implement control measures to manage the risk of scaffold collapse, such as ensuring:

- the design of the scaffold installation considers wind load from the scaffold containment sheeting
- provision and maintenance of sufficient ties of adequate strength for the loads, including wind load
- regular inspection of scaffold ties to check they are not modified or altered by unauthorised people (eg finishing trades who may loosen, relocate or remove ties to gain access to walls and openings)
- scaffolds are not left in a state of weakness when installing or dismantling the scaffolds (eg removing returns as they act like ties, or removing ties in preparation for dismantling).

More detailed information can be found in our [erecting, altering and dismantling scaffolding guide \(part 1\)](#).

## Further information

Please refer to the following guidance materials:

- Australian Standard AS 1576 Series
- [Scaffolding collapse safety alert 15/05/2015](#)
- [SafeWork NSW Erecting, altering and dismantling scaffolding - part-1 - prefabricated steel modular scaffolding](#)
- [Safe Work Australia Scaffolds and scaffolding work general guide](#)
- [Safe Work Australia Guide for scaffold inspection and maintenance](#)

## **About this information release**

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