

11/04/2019

IIR Publication number: IIR20190401

Fatality

- **Incident date:** 1/04/2019
- **Event:** Scaffold Collapse
- **Location:** Macquarie Park

Incident overview

Two formworkers were working on a multi-storey mixed-use construction in Macquarie Park. They were on a concrete slab working beside the base of scaffolding approximately 9 stories high when it collapsed, crushing both workers. One worker was transferred to hospital with critical injuries while the other died at the scene.



Image: Collapsed scaffold on the construction site where work was being done.

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

PCBU's 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](#).

PCBU's are reminded to consider reasonable and practicable control measures to manage the risk of scaffold collapse:

- Ensure the scaffold is stable at all times, including during erection, in situ, during and after any alterations, and when dismantling.
- Ensure the scaffold can withstand all anticipated loads, including the weight of workers, all stored material and any loads due to weather such as wind and rain (particularly where containment sheeting is used).
- Ensure dismantled scaffold components are not stored on the existing scaffold unless it is designed to withstand these loads.
- Know the duty rating (light, medium, heavy or special) and number of decks that can be loaded within a bay.
- Ensure the scaffold is adequately tied to its supporting structure, in accordance with instructions from a competent person. Consult with the scaffold designer, manufacturer, supplier or an engineer, and prevent unauthorised removal or changes.
- Develop systems of work that allow construction activities such as bricklaying, painting, rendering, glazing and cladding installation to be completed without unplanned changes to, or removal of, scaffold ties, e.g. work down from the top of the building as the scaffold is progressively dismantled, or relocate ties so they do not interfere with the work.
- Ensure altering or partially dismantling the scaffold does not weaken it, e.g. removing returns or adjacent bays may require additional ties or bracing on the remaining scaffold.
- Ensure only competent persons with a relevant class of high risk work licence undertake scaffolding work including making alterations.
- Protect the scaffold from damage by vehicles, plant, equipment or materials.
- Use a scaffold that is suitable for the tasks and construction process.
- Provide all workers adequate information, instruction, training and supervision regarding the control measures required to prevent the collapse of the scaffold.
- Have a competent person who holds the same or higher class of high risk work licence appropriate to the class of scaffolding regularly inspect the scaffold, to ensure it has not been modified or altered by unauthorised persons.
- Prepare a safe work method statement for all high risk construction work.

Further information

You can also refer to the following guidance materials:

- [Safe Work Australia - Scaffolds and scaffolding work general guide](#)
- [Safe Work Australia – Guide for scaffold inspection and maintenance](#)
- [SafeWork NSW Erecting, altering and dismantling scaffolding – part 1 – prefabricated steel modular scaffolding](#)
- [Scaffolding collapse safety alert – 14 Sept 2018](#)
- [Dogging, rigging and scaffolding licencing information](#)
- [AS/NZS1576 Part 1: Scaffolding – general requirements](#)
- [AS/NZS4576: Guidelines for scaffolding](#)
- [Construction work Code of Practice](#)
- [Managing the risk of falls at workplaces Code of Practice](#)

Support for injured persons and family members affected by a serious workplace incident

Our Coordinator Family Liaison can provide information on counselling and other support to injured workers and to close family members when a relative has died or is seriously injured in the workplace. Contact us on 13 10 50 or contact@safework.nsw.gov.au

Visit www.coroners.justice.nsw.gov.au for information about the State Coroner.

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.