

SCAFFOLDING ANKLE INJURY

No – 22.20

This Corporate Memory bulletin is issued to recall the circumstances associated with a significant accident or incident that has occurred within the past 5 years.

On the 15th of June 2021, a subcontractor undertaking bridge refurbishment works was walking across a scaffold deck with a bucket of fixings when their right foot came to rest in gap between two scaffolding boards.

As the person transferred their weight onto their right leg, one of the scaffold boards flexed causing the ankle of their right foot to twist suddenly due to the movement of the boards.

The injured person instantly felt pain and discomfort in the affected ankle and after sitting down on the scaffold deck for a few moments they noticed that their ankle had begun to swell up considerably. The injured person called across to the other people that he had been working with and was then assisted to walk off of the site (which involved climbing back up an access ladder).

After receiving first aid, it was suspected that the injured party may have fractured their ankle and an ambulance was called. The injured party was transported to the local accident and emergency hospital by ambulance where it was identified that they had sustained a bad sprain to their ankle



The investigation into this incident identified that the scaffold deck where the accident occurred had not been fully handed over for general use and therefore it should have not been accessible.

It was also identified that some of the spacings of the scaffold boards on the supporting scaffold tubes meant that there were excessive gaps in the scaffolding that needed to be filled with in-fill boards or decking.

These issues were corrected at the time.

All personnel that are in control of site operations where scaffolding operations are taking place are reminded of the following...

- All scaffolding working platforms must be correctly designed and constructed to ensure that there are no access or working hazards present at any stage of the works.
- Access to any scaffolding that is under construction must be strictly controlled so that no other person is allowed to access the area until the scaffold has been inspected and fully handed over.
- A scaffold hand over permit which confirms that the structure is properly constructed and safe for use must be provided prior to the first use of the structure, or after any significant alteration or adaption.
- Any gaps in the scaffold working platform must be closed or covered with a suitable material to prevent any access hazards.
- Sites where personnel are required to work at height must include work at height rescue arrangements (for emergency situations or the retrieval of injured persons) into their site emergency and contingency plans.