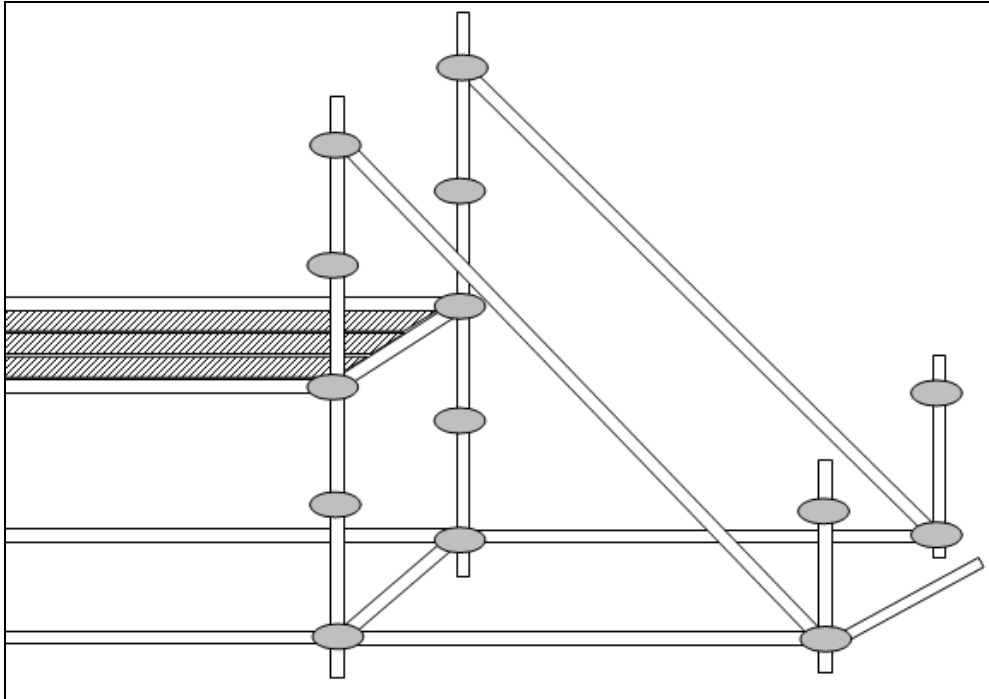


External Industry Alert

Notice Reference No: <small>(Perth Corporate HSE to allocate)</small>		Date:	August 2011
TITLE:	Dismantling of suspended scaffold (fatality)	Type (HSE):	Safety

What happened?

A scaffold team was in the process of dismantling a suspended cantilever scaffold under a jetty. During the removal of a section of the modular scaffold system, the scaffolder inadvertently disconnected a load-bearing member resulting in overload failure of the single, remaining connection. The scaffolder, and the section of scaffold he was standing on and tied off to, fell approximately five metres into the water. The scaffolder did not resurface.



Contributing factors

- The scaffold design does not prevent unintended disconnection of the brace wedge when hit by a hammer.
- The risk of inadvertent disconnection of a load bearing member (releasing the brace) was not identified.
- The scaffolder unintentionally struck the wedge of the brace with the hammer.
- The scaffolder was not connected to any fixed structure.

Industry focus areas

- Modular scaffolding (bay configuration, erection and dismantling process);
- Anchor points – selection, suitability and usage;
- Identification and assessment of risk, and the effectiveness of controls;
- Wedges in close proximity (particularly when dismantling) and visibility (or lack thereof) of the wedge; and
- Emergency management including suitability of emergency response and rescue plan (including planning, communications equipment/method, rescue plan and testing/conducting scenarios).

Further information

- Australian Standards AS/NZS 1576 series *Scaffolding*
- Australian Standards AS/NZS 4576:1995 *Guidelines for scaffolding*
- Commission for Occupational Safety and Health, 2008, *Fall prevention for scaffolders – guidance note*
- Commission for Occupational Safety and Health, 2004, *Prevention of falls at workplaces – code of practice*

For further information please contact: Monique Swanson