



SAFETY ALERT

A serious accident occurred when a worker fell from a scaffold on an upper level of a building. The scaffold was adjacent to the edge of the building and when the worker fell he fell to the ground floor level.

Investigation by EHS identified that the scaffold platform was not provided with guardrails. Although the erected height of the scaffold was below 2.0 metres the fall potential was much greater owing to the positioning of the scaffold on the edge of the building. It was also evident from the condition of the scaffold that whoever erected the scaffold was not competent.

The accident would have been easily prevented by fixing guardrails to the scaffold and if the supervisor had stopped the workers from carrying out their work unsafely.

All contractors should take note of the following points:-

The following must be adhered to:-

- ➔ *Risk assessments must be undertaken for all high level working. In this situation the risk assessment would have identified the increased fall height from working on the building edge and the need for guardrails.*
- ➔ *EHS strongly recommend that all contractors fit guardrails to scaffolds erected under the height of 2.0 metres (statutory height for guardrails). This will greatly reduce the risk of falling.*
- ➔ *Supervisors have a responsibility to ensure workers under their control are working safely. It is not just down to the safety officer to stop unsafe works. If a supervisor sees unsafe work he is responsible to take the necessary action and stop the work.*
- ➔ *Workers must be briefed to understand the basic requirements of working at height safely. They must not feel pressured to carry on at all costs if they think something is dangerous. If a scaffold does not meet the basic requirements workers must be instructed not to use it.*
- ➔ *Only competent persons are to erect scaffold – all contractors must note that in the case of scaffolding competency will involve a level of training.*

**For further information contact:
Environment, Health and Safety
Tel. No. (04) 8040318**

Safety Alert 020 060706