highways england

INFORMATION

# Safety Alert

## Scaffold exclusion zone

12th March 2020

The following pages of this safety alert were issued by Highways England's supply chain partner:

## Aone+

# SafetyAlert

March 2020

## Incident Description:

On Monday 24th February 2020, during the dismantling of an enclosed pier scaffold set up to replace bridge bearings, a scaffolder removed a scaffold tube forming part of the pier handrailing and let the tube slide a short distance through their hands onto the scaffold platform they were stood on.

The tube punched through a narrow timber make-up piece on the edge of the scaffold platform and fell 17m onto the ground below.

The falling tube narrowly missed an operative who was stood underneath the scaffold.

An exclusion zone should have been in place during the scaffolding at height operations preventing the operative from being below the scaffold.

The arrangements for the implementation and removal of the exclusion zone were not fully understood by all parties on site, this led to confusion and a misunderstanding of when the zone was in place and how it was being enforced.

## Initial Investigation Findings:

Upon initial investigation

1. The RAMS covering the scaffolding at height operations referenced an exclusion zone MUST be in place, however they were not being followed.

2. The exclusion zone had not been fully established before the stripping of the scaffold commenced.

3. Robust site management arrangements were not in place resulting in loss of control for safe use and operation of the exclusion zone

## Learning:

- Supervisor must fully ensure that a safe system of work fully detailing the management arrangements and communication methods for any exclusion zone are in place prior to work starting

- Supervisor must ensure that all requirements are fully briefed and understood by all parties on site

- All exclusion zones for must be managed using secure and appropriately signed fencing and a dedicated lookout controlling ALL access / egress through the exclusion zone.

- You MUST NEVER enter exclusion zones without permission from the lookout

home safe and well