

## Toolbox talks

### Tower scaffolds

#### Background information:

Tower scaffolds can be erected quickly and can provide a safe access. However, they are involved in numerous accidents each year. These accidents usually happen because the tower has either not been erected properly or has not been used properly.

**Example 1:** A subcontract employee sustained a badly broken wrist requiring pinning and detention in hospital as a result of a fall of approximately 4m from a mobile scaffold tower. He was unable to work for some nine months. The investigation showed the platform was erected beyond a safe working height and the operative was moving the platform whilst aloft. Also the tower had not been inspected by a competent person before use. Clearly this accident was avoidable by following the basic rules below for safe use of scaffold towers.

**Example 2:** Two pre-cast concrete erectors fell from a scaffold tower. One was badly bruised, one fractured his shoulder. Neither had been trained in the erection and safe use of towers. The causes of the collapse were failure to use outriggers to increase base dimension/failure to lock the castor wheel/use in excessively windy conditions.

#### Hazards:

- Incorrect erection
- Collapse of tower scaffold
- Overturning of tower scaffold
- Fall from tower scaffold
- Poor floor/ground conditions
- Contact with overhead power lines or obstructions.

#### Health and safety points:

- Ensure you are competent to erect the scaffold tower. If not do not attempt it - see your supervisor for training. Acceptable training is PASMA or equivalent
- Have a copy of the manufacturer instruction manual available.
- Follow the manufacturer instructions for erection, use and dismantling
- Ensure that the components are in good order before commencing erection
- The tower must be vertical and the legs should rest properly on firm level ground
- Ensure any wheels and outriggers are locked before using the scaffold tower
- If a tower scaffold isn't required to move, the base plate should be used instead of wheels as they give greater stability
- Never climb the outside of the scaffold tower as it may pull it over – always use the internal access provided
- Do not exceed the base height ratio which applies. For aluminium alloy towers these are usually - maximum height = 3.5 x minimum base dimension (inside building), maximum height = 3.0 x minimum base dimension (outside building). Height is measured to the top platform level
- Extra precautions may be required when out of use and outside depending on weather conditions. Either secure back to a structure or dismantle
- Stabilisers or outriggers can be used to increase the base width so that height can be added
- Stabilisers/outriggers must be rigidly fixed to the tower and in firm contact with the ground
- Where stabilisers are used on mobile towers, they should not be raised more than 12mm off the ground or the height of the tower reduced to its free-standing height before the equipment is moved
- It is good practice to tie all towers wherever possible
- Extra precautions may be required depending on weather conditions
- Ensure guard-rails and toe boards are in place on all platforms before gaining access
- Before a mobile tower is moved its path should be checked for ground obstructions, power lines, holes and soft areas
- Always close the access flap on the platform once you are on it
- Ensure there are no overhead powerlines or obstructions in the area when erecting or moving the tower scaffold
- Do not place/use ladders on the top platform to extend the height of the tower
- Do not move the scaffold whilst persons are aloft
- Towers must be inspected by a competent person when they are first erected, have been erected for

Document Reference	Process Parent	Revision Status	Document Owner	Date	Page
SH TBT 6.2	SH PRO	Rev 1	Ray Bentley	Jan 2012	1 of 2

## Management System

**Toolbox talks**

seven days or following inclement weather likely to affect its strength or stability. The results of the inspection must be recorded

- Ensure an up to date scafftag is attached. When a tower is left incomplete or removed from use, the scafftag should be removed.

**Question time:**

- Q What must you have available before erecting a scaffold tower?
- Q How do you gain access to the platform of a scaffold tower?
- Q What must you ensure before gaining access to the scaffold tower?

**Have you got any questions?**

Record questions on the attendance sheet.

**Safety reminder:**

**Scaffold tower must be erected to the manufacturers specification or they are unsafe. If the scaffold tower wheels are not locked then it is unstable.**

Document Reference	Process Parent	Revision Status	Document Owner	Date	Page
SH TBT 6.2	SH PRO	Rev 1	Ray Bentley	Jan 2012	2 of 2