

SAFETY ALERT #362



Dated: Sunday, 1st NOVEMBER 2009

Title: SCAFFOLDING INJURY



This **HARDHAT** saved
my life!...

- IP



Description of Incident:

A subcontract scaffolder on site was taken to the hospital after suffering a small cut which required 6 stitches to his head. A team of scaffolders were engaged on dismantling of scaffolding erected along perimeter of the building. They were using "HANDBALL" method where the components are dismantled from the top and passed downwards to ground using a chain of people. The IP was a part of the team approximately 2 meters above the ground of level 00. The other scaffolder at level 4 passed the standard down to his colleague at level 3 but he failed to grasp the standard properly letting it slip through his hands down to the scaffold lift level. The impact knocked the scaffolder to the ground sustaining injury to his head. He was wearing his helmet. The emergency response team was contacted and the emergency vehicle attended the site. The injured person was transported to the hospital for further treatment, medication and examination.

Action Taken:

- Tool Box given to all operatives regarding manual handling the brief preview incident happened and manual handling
- Incident investigations have been undertaken by our HSE team
- Immediate medical attention given to the injured person

Lesson:

The hazard for consideration is falling objects where the task being undertaken is erecting or dismantling of scaffolding using the labour intensive "HANDBALL" method. The ground crew must access and work in such a way as to ensure that they are protected at all times overhead by the above deck or other means. The risks are elevated when the scaffolding deck is high with multiple manual handlings of the equipment. All work zone to be barricaded and signed where there is a risk of falling object. The hierarchy of risk should be applied and elimination of the task should be considered.

This method of handballing has been the result of numerous accidents in Dubai. An alternative method should be devised to eliminate this hazard. If resorting to this method, persons should be staggered & not directly above or below each other. Competent supervision to ensure safe work procedures are followed. Ensure exclusion zone around the exercise - there should be nothing below the lifting zone. Fatigue kicks in with all manual handling, so more rest periods would be appropriate. Mechanical means to be used wherever possible, manual handling to be considered as a last resort.