

NWE Bulletin 63 – Skull fracture



Significant Incident

This Alert describes the background of an event that occurred at a Keller work site, and outlines corrective actions and recommendations that should be taken to prevent similar occurrences elsewhere.

Event Details

Whilst working adjacent to scaffold the Injured Person (IP) removed his hard hat to scratch his head. A scaffold coupler fell from height and struck the IP on the head.



The IP was taken to hospital and later had an operation to remove a bone fragment beneath the fracture that was caused by incident. He was released after a few days but the incident could have resulted in a fatality.

PPE is a last form of defence but is provided for a reason and should always be worn when in the work area.

Due to ongoing investigation by the client it is unclear how the scaffold coupler left the scaffold at this time. All works should be clearly coordinated especially when it involves working below or adjacent to other contractors.

Ensure that clarity is sought from the main contractor when working in close proximity to other contractors and liaise with their supervisors to ensure that all parties are in agreement to what works are being carried out.



Scaffold couplers weigh approximately 1.0kg, we believe the coupler fell from the scaffold between the tenth & thirteenth floor of the building.

Corrective Actions:

- All works suspended on site
- Investigations started and are ongoing

Recommendations:

- Coordinate works with client so you know who else is working in close proximity to you
- Never remove your helmet whilst on a construction site unless you are absolutely sure that you are safe from objects falling from height.
- Following any incident review any related work instructions and/or risk assessments
- No working is to be allowed around scaffold unless you are:
 - i) outside a clearly defined exclusion zone preventing access within 1/3 of the scaffolding height from the edge of the scaffold or
 - ii) have confirmation in writing that no one will be altering or working on the scaffold.

Remember everyone is a leader when it comes to safety and don't forget to Check Mate.



For further information about this event, please do not hesitate to contact: [Simon Jones, HSEQ Manager \(NWE\)](#)