

# Scaffold Safety



Government  
of South Australia

Department for Infrastructure  
and Transport

## Worker seriously injured by falling scaffold plank

**A worker suffered serious head injuries after being struck by a falling unsecured scaffold plank at a construction site. The plank fell 8 levels.**

### Safety issues

The erection, alteration, use and dismantling of a scaffold exposes workers and others to the risk of being struck by falling objects such as scaffold components, tools, or in the event of a collapse, the entire scaffold.

Hazards associated with erecting, altering, or dismantling a scaffold include but not limited to:

- Poor environmental conditions
- Void areas not identified or protected (e.g. ladder access voids)
- Incomplete scaffolds or loose scaffold components where work is being done or is likely to be done.
- Inadequate training, instruction, and supervision of scaffold workers

### Some control measures.

- Using perimeter containment screening especially after planks are installed.
- Plank latches to be engaged at time of installation.
- Stacking of loose planks on decks should be avoided.
- Exclusion zones to be set up where there is a risk of being hit by falling objects.
- Using catch platforms, overhead gantries, and safety nets, where practicable.
- Use mechanical hoists to move materials.
- Use clear signs warning people not to access hazardous areas.
- Develop safe work procedures and if high risk a SWMS.
- Provide information, training, and instruction regarding exclusion zones.
- Organise the sequence of work tasks.
- Do not allow materials to be dropped from a scaffold.
- Implement good housekeeping practices.
- Scaffold planks should be secured as described in the:  
[Guide to scaffolds and scaffolding](#)
- Other information available on:  
[How to manage work health and safety risks – Code of Practice Scaffolding webpage on the SafeWork Australia website](#)  
[Scaffolding Industry Safety Standard by SafeWork NSW](#)

