

Issue 7 of 2021 – 3 March

## SAFework NSW ALERT YOUNG WORKER FALLS THROUGH PENETRATION

Members are advised that SafeWork NSW recently responded to an incident where a 19-year-old labour hire worker suffered serious injuries after falling more than 12 metres through an open penetration at a Shellharbour construction site. The worker was drilling holes into Dincell wall panels in the lift shaft on Level 2 when he fell through the open penetration to the concrete lower ground floor.



### Safety information

Implement 'reasonably practicable' control measures to manage the risks associated with falls through penetrations while completing formwork and other construction.

Make sure you:

- install edge protection or cover any penetrations that will be exposed during the stripping / dismantling process, such as:
  - leading or perimeter edge protection – handrails should comply with AS 1657, or
  - fit-for-purpose penetration covers that withstand the load of workers and materials. Ensure they are secured in position and are clearly identified so they are not mistaken for construction material

- include cast-in-mesh as a back-up system to protect penetrations in concrete slabs. They should be 50mm x 50mm or smaller mesh size and made of material capable of withstanding potential loads
- ensure workers always use a suitable work platform for the task, such as scaffolds, elevated work platform, boom or scissor lift where possible. Workers must be trained to use the work platform or scaffold
- provide a safe way to access and exit the work area
- prepare a safe work method statement for all high-risk construction work
- have an emergency plan in place and ensure it has been adequately explained to all workers.

SafeWork NSW inspectors regularly blitz construction sites to check compliance and talk with businesses and workers about how to work safely at heights. Use this [Construction Falls from Heights Blitz checklist \(PDF 504kb\)](#) to find out if your construction site is working at heights safely.

#### **More information**

- [Formwork - Code of Practice \(PDF 1MB\)](#)
- [Managing the risk of falls at workplaces - Code of Practice \(PDF 4.1MB\)](#)
- [SafeWork NSW formwork information page](#)
- [Falls through voids – safety video](#)

View the latest incident information releases on the [SafeWork NSW website](#).

SafeWork NSW encourages members to share the attached incident information with your workers and any other contacts in the industry to help highlight the risks of excavation work.