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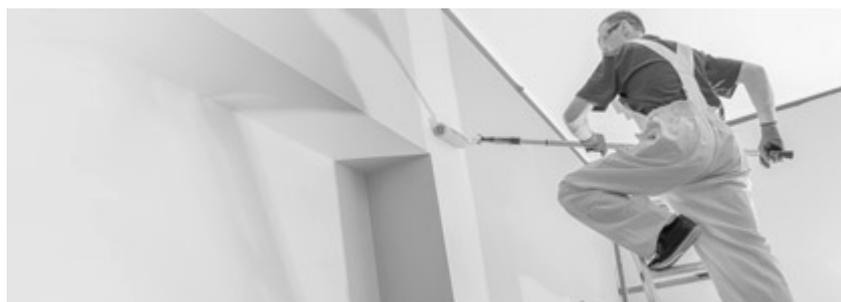
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IT'S NOT ALWAYS A LONG WAY DOWN

You don't have to be on top of a 12-storey building to be at risk of death or serious injury. A fall from just two metres - or even into a hole, trench or off the back of a truck - can prove fatal.

Early this year, a bricklayer died when he fell five metres through a void at a construction site. A piece of plywood had been thrown across the void and left unsecured, leaving an ad-hoc, unplanned and totally inadequate safety system.

The principal contractor was fined \$425,000 and its director \$85,500.

In another incident a worker fell through a trapdoor at a bottle shop and broke both of her legs. The publican was fined \$150,000 for not having safe systems of work, something as simple as a barrier or alternative access to the cellar.

On top of potential legal action if you're found to be at fault, a workplace injury opens a can of worms - downtime, poor morale, replacement worker hire and more headaches you don't need.

Over the past three years, 19 people have died after falling from a height in NSW workplaces. More than 13,000 were injured and about 200 were permanently disabled.

But don't panic, there are plenty of ways you can help avoid mishaps and ensure your workers go home in one piece.

Here are three steps to remember:

1. If the work can be performed from ground level, do so. Wherever possible prefabricate roofs at ground level, reduce shelving heights, pre-sling loads so you don't have to get on the tray to load or unload

- trucks, and design windows so they can be cleaned safely from the ground.
2. If it's not possible to work on the ground, use a fall-prevention device such as an elevated work platform, guard rail or scaffolding.
 3. A fall-arrest system is the next best option but it must include a lanyard, harness and anchor. Check the buckle, webbing and D-rings before using it. And, make sure you're hooked up and not just wearing a harness - yes, it happens.

It's really simple to stay safe, so check out our [simple safety](#) page on falls - and discover how easy it is to comply with your legal obligations.

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UPDATE FROM SAFEWORK

Back in September I discussed the [Work health and safety roadmap 2022](#), our strategy to ensure healthy, safe and productive working lives for workers in NSW. To support this, we have launched the [Strategic business plan 2016-17](#). Aligning with the roadmap, the plan outlines our priorities for 2016-17 and is well worth a look.

On another note, did you know that November is Asbestos Awareness Month? This time each year we focus on educating Australians about the dangers of asbestos in and around homes, particularly when renovating. Visit the [Asbestos Awareness](#) website to find out what you can do to keep you and your family safe.

Fall prevention deserves your attention

Our Focus On Industry Formwork project was launched to increase awareness and guidance to industry about falls from height prevention, keeping safe and reducing fatalities and permanent disabilities.

A key initiative for this project is the development of a formwork industry network. The [inaugural meeting](#) will be held 30 November 4pm at Parramatta Town Hall. The network is open to all formworkers who would like to voice concerns, share experiences and discuss innovative solutions. Complete [this form](#) by 23 November if you'd like to attend.

Do you use a quad bike at work? We need your help

Since 2001, over 220 people have died while riding quad bikes in Australia. We are working to address this statistic via the recently launched Quad Bike Safety Improvement Program, but we also need your help.

If you are over 18 and use a quad bike in your workplace, please spare 20 minutes to complete the [Quad Bike Workplace Safety Survey](#). It's run by the Transport and Road Safety Research Centre at the University of New South Wales and funded by SafeWork NSW.

The survey is confidential and it will help us understand how quad bikes are used in the workplace.

Seeking businesses to pilot safety program in North West NSW

A reminder that we're currently seeking small and large businesses across the North West to take part in the [2017 Mentor Program](#). This free program involves experienced businesses helping small businesses to identify new ways to address safety.

We're piloting a new approach to the program in the North West, where mentors and mentees from across this region will be paired together with the aim of making mentors more accessible.

The latest safety alerts

We've released a number of safety alerts this month, including tower cranes, work platforms and aluminium cylinders.

- [Erecting, climbing and dismantling tower cranes](#)
- [Mobile elevating work platforms used in orchards](#)
- [Gas cylinders manufactured from aluminium alloy 6351-T6](#)

Hunter Valley company fined after work experience student partially blinded

A Hunter Valley metal fabrication business [has been fined](#) \$240,000 on appeal after a 15 year old work experience student suffered partial blindness from welding without eye protection.

The Court of Criminal Appeal upheld the Attorney General's appeal against the February 2016 decision of the District Court to dismiss SafeWork NSW's charge for a breach of the Work Health and Safety Act against Tho Services Limited.

Thanks for reading, we'll see you next month for the last Wrap of 2016!



Peter Dunphy
Executive Director SafeWork



BEST OF THE BEST RECOGNISED AT SAFEWORK AWARDS

The winners of the 2016 SafeWork Awards have been announced, showcasing another outstanding selection of safety and recovery at work solutions and systems.

A high standard of entries this year meant our judges had their work cut out for them, selecting a total of nine winners across six categories. The winners represent small and large businesses from across the state, from industries including construction, mining, aborigiculture and disability services.

As well as recognising those who go the extra mile, the Awards aim to encourage business across the state to implement similar solutions and processes. We'll be showcasing a number of these exciting entries in the coming months so watch this space to see what others have been doing and get inspired!

And the winners are..

EXCELLENCE IN WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY CULTURE

[Bohmer's Tree Care](#)

[Laing O'Rourke](#)

BEST SOLUTION TO AN IDENTIFIED WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUE

[Bracton Industries](#)

[HY-TEC Industries - Austen Quarry](#)

BEST INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION TO WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY (no formal WHS responsibility)

[Kerry Dent \(Cabonne Council\)](#)

BEST INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION TO WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY (formal WHS responsibility)

[Shahn Ruprai \(SRS Roads Pty Ltd\)](#)

EXCELLENCE IN RECOVERY AT WORK FOR BUSINESS

[Endeavour Foundation](#)

RECOVERY AT WORK ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR INJURED WORKERS

[Chris May \(Abergeldie Complex Infrastructure\)](#)

SAFEWORK NSW LEADERSHIP IN SAFETY AWARD

[Clive Woodnutt \(Bohmer's Tree Care\)](#)

If you'd like to be notified when the 2017 Awards open, visit

safeworkawards.com.au and subscribe for updates!



SAFETY NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

SafeWork NSW scans local and international media and relevant journals to keep you up to date with new research and developments in workplace safety, recovery at work and motor vehicle accidents. Here's what we found during our most recent review.

Participation in workplace health programs

A Danish study of 10,000 workers has investigated the association between work environment characteristics and participation in workplace health programs.

The study found that:

- programs offered during work time were associated with a higher participation rate compared to those offered during leisure time
- low social support and fatiguing work were associated with low participation
- high physically or emotionally demanding work, when combined with low job control, appeared to limit participation.

[More](#)

Chronic diseases from working long hours

A study by Ohio State University and Mayo Clinic investigated the relationship between long work hours and chronic disease. The study, which included 32 years of job history for around 7500 people, found a very strong and consistent relationship between working long hours and the risk of developing certain chronic diseases.

The effects were considerably greater among women. Women working over 40 hours per week were at increased risk of heart disease, non-skin cancers, diabetes and arthritis. Men working over 40 hours per week were at increased risk of arthritis.

[More](#)

The future of NSW

The report Future State: NSW 2056 was recently released by the NSW Treasurer. It projects economic, demographic, workforce and housing trends across NSW over the next 40 years.

In 2056, it is predicted that:

- the NSW economy will be two-and-a-half times bigger, worth \$1.3 trillion dollars - the first state to reach a trillion-dollar economy
- the population will rise to 11.2 million - up 50 per cent
- life expectancy for males will increase from 81 to 89, females from 85 to 91
- twenty-four per cent of the population will be aged 65 and over - up from 16 per cent
- eighteen per cent of people aged 65 and over will still be in the workforce
- the services sector is likely to be the key driver of jobs growth
- the health sector will make up the largest share of expenses
- close to two million new homes will be built
- innovation and digital technology will deliver employment opportunities for regional NSW.

[More](#)

Host employer v labour-hire company

In 2009, a worker employed by a mining company sustained neck and back injuries when a labour-hire employee dropped a load onto his truck, causing the truck to shake violently. The worker sued the labour-hire company, arguing that it was liable for its employee's negligence.

Both the District Court and the Court of Appeal found that the host employer had complete control over all its workers, including those from the labour-hire company, and therefore the liability for the labour-hire employee's negligent act was transferred from the labour-hire company to the host employer.

However, one judge, in partial dissent, noted that the host employer was entitled to give directions to the labour-hire employee to perform his work in a safe manner, but it was not clear whether the labour-hire company had divested itself of the authority to also give directions to its employee.

Cancer-causing chemicals

The European Commission will soon introduce new limit values for 13 cancer-causing chemicals. A limit value sets the maximum concentration at which the chemical may be present in the air.

Respirable crystalline silica is one of the carcinogens being considered for change - it is a leading cause of 'silicosis' and lung cancer. At the same time, six European organisations have developed a three-year roadmap designed to reduce exposure to carcinogens in the workplace.

Some planned activities include:

- giving employers more information about limit values and risk management
- influencing the workplace culture
- raising awareness about the risk of exposure to carcinogens, in particular among small and medium businesses.

The roadmap is expected to raise awareness and lead to innovations in production processes, resulting in the carcinogenic substances being replaced with safer alternatives.

In related news, Safe Work Australia has published three reports about preventing exposure to carcinogens in the agriculture, construction and manufacturing industries.



ONE MISTAKE, A LIFETIME OF REGRET

When it comes to handling chemicals in the workplace you can never know too much

Adam Thomson was 18 years old and had just started his first job, in the horticulture industry. His task one day was to dip tubers into a tub of chemical solution before drying them on racks above heaters. Unbeknownst to Adam, he was using a chemical solution 20 times stronger than it needed to be.

His workmate, who mixed the solution, had misread the label on the chemicals delivered to the farm the previous day.

With no hand cloth, antibacterial soap or hand sanitiser, Adam spent three hours with his hands immersed in a concoction that has left him scarred for life. Ten years on and Adam still has chemical sores on both hands and forearms. It was two years before the lesions even appeared.

What's the issue?

Over the past three years in NSW, more than 5000 people have been injured in the course of using hazardous chemicals in the workplace.

Some of these injuries are minor, such as headaches, nausea and vomiting. Others are far more serious, such as blindness, poisoning, chemical burns and respiratory illness.

Exposure to hazardous chemicals can even cause cancer, birth defects or

severe damage to your lungs, liver or kidneys.

The danger is not always evident. In the workplace, hazardous chemicals can come in the form of powders, fumes and gases. Some common examples include acids, disinfectants, glues, paint and pesticides.

Chances are your work brings you into contact with hazardous chemicals or chemical processes. As dangerous as some chemicals are, you can work with them safely by knowing what you are working with, how to handle and store them, and what to do in an emergency.

Recognise the hazards

When handling hazardous chemicals, knowledge is your most powerful tool. Start by recognising the specific hazard or hazards a hazardous chemical may present.

- The safety data sheet is one of your best sources for information on hazardous chemicals. It contains a summary of a chemical's hazards, as well as proper handling, use and storage methods. It also lists permissible exposure limits, the right personal protective equipment, fire-fighting techniques and other emergency procedures.
- Create a workplace register by making a list of all the hazardous chemicals that you use, produce, store or handle, and always keep it up to date.

Pay attention to labels

The first step in identifying a chemical is to read the label. Each chemical that arrives in your workplace must have accurate labels containing specific information.

- Read the label carefully for a chemical's hazardous ingredients, the principal danger it poses and the name and address of the manufacturer, who can provide further information.
- Some chemical manufacturers have their own customised hazard identification, so you need to become familiar with the system in your workplace. Stay informed and take time to understand all the hazards of the chemicals you use.

Handling and storage is key

You can reduce the risks of hazardous chemicals by handling and storing them properly. While specific requirements vary from one chemical to another, there are general guidelines that apply to most hazardous materials.

- Before you use any chemical, make sure you know what it is. Do not use any chemical from an unidentified container. When transferring chemicals, use the proper container for each material.
- The container you are transferring the material to must also have a proper label. Make sure the container is leak-proof, sturdy and compatible with the chemical.
- Stack containers carefully so they won't fall, and be sure they're not stacked too high, blocking aisles or obstructing emergency exits.

Protect yourself

- To reduce the risk of exposure to hazardous chemicals, wear personal protective equipment that is designed and tested for the chemicals you are using. Some chemicals require aprons or full-body coverings to protect you from splashes or contamination.
- You may need an air purification device in areas where normal ventilation will not protect you from harmful vapours. These devices could range from simple air filters to respirators or even a self-contained breathing apparatus.
- In all cases, protect your eyes with safety goggles or a face shield and protect your hands with appropriate gloves.

Be prepared

Your workplace's emergency action plan contains specific information for handling hazardous chemical emergencies, including contact information, evacuation and rescue procedures, and reporting guidelines. Learn the plan before you have to use it.

Your knowledge could save lives and equipment if you apply it quickly and properly.

Keep it simple

Visit our [simple safety](#) page on hazardous chemicals for more information, and your other workplace legal obligations. All outlined in simple, plain English.



SafeWork NSW

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