Editorial

In this issue of Safety Soapbox, Tony Cockerell from the WorkSafe Victoria Construction Practices Unit talks about the importance of bracing masonry walls during construction.

Last year a worker died after an unsupported brick wall collapsed onto him, whilst working on a housing construction site.

Since that fatality there have been a number of incidents involving masonry walls collapsing not only on housing sites but also on residential and commercial construction sites. These walls were not braced or were inadequately braced for the wind loads.

Inadequately braced masonry walls are a risk to workers onsite and potentially to the public. Both the builder and the contractor involved in building a masonry wall have similar duties in relation to ensuring the wall is adequately braced. This is so site workers and the public are not at risk of wall collapse.

In July 2014, WorkSafe published a safety alert – ‘Dangers of freestanding masonry walls.’ This alert warned of the danger of wall collapse and provided advice for employers and self-employed persons on managing the risks associated with freestanding masonry walls on construction sites.

With the high winds of spring fast approaching, I encourage builders and masonry contractors to read the safety alert and implement the recommended control measures. It is also important to discuss with site supervisors and workers involved in the construction of the wall, the requirements for bracing and monitoring masonry walls during construction.

Builders should as part of their site induction process, inform all workers coming onto site of the risks of braced walls and the site rules associated with working around these structures.

Read more
Victoria

Southbank crane collapse
WorkSafe is investigating an incident where a crane collapsed on a Melbourne building site, leaving one worker injured. WorkSafe has been coordinating the crane’s safe removal.

Read more

Man injured in cherry picker bucket
Paramedics have revived a man, after he was injured while loading a cherry picker onto the back of a truck.

Read more

Speed down to 20km/h on section of highway in Port Fairy
VicRoads, Victoria Police, Wannon Water and WorkSafe Victoria have conducted a joint review into site safety around a Port Fairy water main upgrade on the Princess Highway.

Read more

Prosecution results summaries
WorkSafe Victoria has updated the prosecution summaries webpage. These summaries include the prosecution of a plumber over no fall protection and Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS).

Read more

Current OHS prosecutions
WorkSafe Victoria has updated the list of current prosecutions. See link for more information.

Read more

Western Australia

WA state government releases package of safety reforms
Live electrical work will be banned under WA state government changes aimed at avoiding more deaths in the electrical contracting industry. The changes will be enforced by WorkSafe WA, with changes applying to work including insulation, roofing and plumbing.

Read more

Safety Alert
WA Department of Mines and Petroleum has issued a new Safety Alert and two new significant incident reports. To access this new information please refer to the Safety Alerts on the Safety Regulation System as provided below, and use the ‘search’ function.

Read more

Legacy of Cyclone Tracy
An expert says millions of tonnes of asbestos could be buried around Darwin, following rebuild after Cyclone Tracy.

Read more
South Australia

Update – SA Kanmantoo copper mine
Further to an article in the last edition of Soapbox, ‘Man inhaled gas fumes in mine’, Safety Soapbox would like to confirm that investigations have found to date that there was no indication of the worker receiving gas inhalation. SafeWork SA found no breach of work, health and safety regulations on the site.


Queensland

Queensland
Man falls into tank
A man has suffered spinal and head injuries after falling about six metres into a water tank at a Gold Coast building site.

Read more

NSW

Window cleaner sustains injuries
A window cleaner has suffered serious head, pelvis and spinal injuries after falling three storeys from a Sydney store. WorkCover is investigating the incident.

Read more

Boom lift fire
Two men had just started to go up in the platform to check the floodlights at a sports field, when they noticed what they described as “drops of fire and smoke” coming from the machine. The two men wisely decided to abandon their work plans and exit the platform.

Read more

Worker suffers serious injuries on construction site
A worker has suffered extensive injuries, following an accident on a construction site. It is understood the man may have been struck by the forklift before its load fell on top of him. Investigations continue.

Read more
Recall
The ACCC has released the following information on a recent product recall.

Product: Schneider Electric (Australia) Pty Limited—230DRAS1MI and 230DRAS2MI Meter Boxes.
Hazard: A screw on the side of the meter isolator may be electrically live. There is a risk of electric shock if contact is made with this screw.

Read more