



Safety alert 7/2009

Worker fatally injured in fall from grid mesh panel walkway

Incident

A general hand at a fertiliser factory was fatally injured after he fell approximately 13 metres from a grid mesh panel walkway.

The employee was investigating a possible fault in the fertiliser conveyor system in the factory.

Some of the grid mesh panels which made up the walkway were not secured to the structure of the walkway at the time of the fatality, and could be lifted and moved.

Factors to consider

- Individual grid mesh panels were not secured to the structure of the walkway.
- When the walkway was first constructed and commissioned, individual grid mesh panels were secured to the structure of the walkway by four clips.
- Approximately four years after the commissioning of the walkway, the grid mesh panels were removed for sandblasting and coating, to protect them from the highly corrosive effects of the fertiliser. When they were replaced on the walkway following the treatment, they were not secured to the structure of the walkway.

Recommendations

1. Securely fix grid mesh panels to the supporting structure, in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
2. Regularly conduct inspections of grid mesh panels and replace damaged or missing panels and clips immediately.
3. Cover or guard areas with missing grid mesh panels until they can be replaced.

Further information

- Code of Practice – [Prevention of Falls at Workplaces \(2004\)](#).
- AS1657 – 1992 Fixed Platforms, walkways, stairways and ladders - design, construction and installation.
- [Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996](#).
- WorkSafe's internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au or customer service on 1300 307 877 or email safety@commerce.wa.gov.au

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