

Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities

Appendix 2.5
**INFORMATION FLYER
AND
SAMPLES OF MEDIA RELEASES**

Report
Falls Prevention in Construction
2008

**AN AUSTRALIAN
JOINT COMPLIANCE PROJECT**

July 2008

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Joint Australian and New Zealand campaign Falls prevention in construction

A campaign is currently underway, across Australia and New Zealand, focussing on falls prevention in construction. During visits, inspectors will be checking to verify that falls prevention measures on site are appropriate.

This Trans-Tasman campaign has been initiated by the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities as falls from height continues to be a hazard which results in a significant number of deaths and injuries within the construction industry each year.

The following workplace safety authorities have joined forces to mount a coordinated campaign of inspector visits to construction sites in Australia and New Zealand:

Participating Safety Authorities

- ACT WorkCover
- ComCare
- Department of Labour, New Zealand
- NT WorkSafe
- SafeWork, SA
- WorkCover NSW
- Workplace Health & Safety, Queensland
- Workplace Standards Tasmania
- WorkSafe Victoria
- WorkSafe Western Australia

The campaign will run during February and March, involving visits to at least 900 sites. The construction sectors being targeted during this particular campaign are housing and small-scale general construction sites with a project value of up to \$3 million.

During the campaign, inspectors will pay particular attention to finish and fit-out work, roof work, bricklaying and rendering as well as work associated with stairways or balconies.

All detected instances of immediate risk or other non-compliance with falls prevention requirements will result in appropriate compliance and enforcement action.

Advice on preventing falls from height on construction sites is freely available from [LOCAL WORKPLACE SAFETY AUTHORITY] and includes:

- [INSERT GUIDANCE LIST]

You can get copies from your nearest [LOCAL WORKPLACE SAFETY AUTHORITY OFFICE] or by downloading it from our website:

[INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY URL]

If you need further advice to improve health and safety at your worksite, you can get it from [LOCAL STATE/TERRITORY WORKPLACE AUTHORITY] on tel. XXXXXX.

[Signed – PROGRAM DIRECTOR, LOCAL WORKPLACE AUTHORITY]
January, 2008

Generic media release 1 (Victorian version)

December 2007

Trans-Tasman falls prevention in construction campaign

Workplace health and safety regulators across Australia and New Zealand are joining forces to target falls prevention in the construction industry, particularly small and medium-sized projects.

Site inspections will be carried out in February and March next year.

Falls prevention is a priority focus area for Australia's workplace safety authorities as they are the single-biggest cause of workplace deaths in the construction industry.

"You don't have to fall from a great height to be killed, end up in a wheel chair or with brain damage," Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities* (HWSA) chair, John Watson, said.

"There have been deaths from falls considerably less than two metres. Frequently it is the employer themselves."

"For the sake of those doing the job, their families and workmates, as well as your business, fix falls risks now."

"By announcing the campaign now, we expect all building trades which work at height to review their work procedures and, if necessary, introduce safer systems of work before inspectors visit,"

Builders, renderers, plumbers, electricians, roof tilers and other trades are at risk of serious injury if fall prevention measures are not taken.

"In the past three years there have seen eight deaths and 1,070 compensated injuries due to falls from height in Victoria's construction sector. [replace with local statistics]

"Don't assume that because you're never had an injury you're working safely. It might just mean you've been lucky," Mr Watson said.

All health and safety regulators produce publications and guidance material which is available in printed form or as electronic documents on their websites. They can also be contacted for general falls prevention advice.

Victorian safety information is available online at www.worksafe.vic.gov.au or by calling the advisory service on 1800 136 089. [replace with local information]

Editor's Note: The Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) is a group comprising the senior executives (or their representatives) of the peak bodies responsible for the regulation and administration of occupational health and safety in Australia and New Zealand.

Media contact:

Generic media release 1 (revised)

January 2008

Australian falls prevention in construction campaign

Workplace health and safety regulators across Australia are joining forces to target falls prevention in the construction industry, particularly small and medium-sized projects.

Site inspections will be carried out in February and March next year.

Falls prevention is a priority focus area for Australia's workplace safety authorities as they are the single-biggest cause of workplace deaths in the construction industry.

"You don't have to fall from a great height to be killed, end up in a wheel chair or with brain damage," Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities* (HWSA) chair, John Watson, said.

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Media contact:

Generic media release 2 (Victorian version)

February 2008

Dangerous work at height under the hammer

WorkSafe inspectors are targeting dangerous work at height on housing and small to medium construction sites across the state during February and March.

The inspections are part of a national safety campaign targeting falls prevention in the construction industry.

Safety inspectors will visit construction sites and where breaches established safety laws are breached Improvement Notices or Prohibition Notices will be issued.

Eight people died and there were 1,070 compensated injuries due to falls from height in Victoria's construction sector over the past three financial years.

In 2007 two Victorian construction workers fell to their deaths and almost 300 more made injury claims as a result of falls.

"Most of these injuries were serious. More than 60% resulted in the worker being off work more than six weeks," WorkSafe's Construction and Utilities Division Director Chris Webb said.

"Working at height is part of construction work, but don't assume that because you or your workers have never had that you're working safely. You may have been lucky."

"All employers have a legal duty to ensure that any worker required to work at heights can do so safely and without risk to their life or health.

"Every fall is preventable. There is no excuse for exposing workers to this risk," Mr Webb said.

"WorkSafe expects builders and building trades to review their work at height procedures and, if necessary, introduce safer systems of work before an inspector visits."

"Wherever appropriate height safety standards are not being met, inspectors will take appropriate enforcement action", Mr Webb warned.

Falls prevention publications and safety information is available in printed form or as electronic documents online at www.worksafe.vic.gov.au or call WorkSafe's advisory service on 1800 136 089.

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E-mail: safety@docep.wa.gov.au Internet: www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

January 31, 2008

Trans-Tasman falls prevention in construction campaign

Workplace safety and health authorities across Australia and New Zealand are joining forces in February and March to target the prevention of falls in the construction industry.

A total of around 900 inspections will be conducted across Australia and New Zealand, with a minimum of 80 site visits in Perth and WA regional areas.

WorkSafe WA Commissioner Nina Lyhne said today that falls prevention was a priority focus area for Australia's workplace safety authorities because falls were one of the most significant causes of workplace death in the construction industry.

"You don't need to fall far to be killed or seriously injured – in fact, there have been deaths from falls of less than a couple of metres," Ms Lyhne said.

"Sadly, an average of two Western Australians die every year as a result of workplace falls, with around 1260 additional injuries, many of them serious and permanent.

"This is the reason that falls from height is one of WorkSafe's operational priority areas and also the reason this national inspection campaign is so important."

The campaign has two phases – an education phase, which has already been undertaken, and a compliance phase, which will begin next week around the country.

In WA, discussions on the campaign have been held with industry associations such as the Housing Industry Association and Master Builders Association, as well as unions involved in the construction industry with a view to these groups notifying their members of the upcoming campaign and the measures they need to have in place.

"The construction industry should be well aware of its responsibilities with regard to falls prevention, so inspectors will be enforcing the legislative requirements if they come across any unsafe work practices," Ms Lyhne said.

"Falls are readily preventable, and it need not be difficult or costly to ensure

that suitable barriers or fall arrest systems are organised before a tragedy can occur.

“A code of practice on falls has existed in WA for the past 17 years, with the original code being initiated in response to the number of fatalities being recorded in the construction industry at that time.

“The current code – updated in 2004 - provides information on the identification of common fall hazards at all workplaces and the use of fall-arrest equipment and systems, along with chapters on general work practices such as the use of ladders.

“It also has a strong emphasis on promoting safe design principles for buildings to eliminate fall hazards from the outset, in keeping with prevention strategies to eliminate hazards and control risks at the source.”

The Code of Practice on the Prevention of Falls in Workplaces can be downloaded at no cost from WorkSafe’s website at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au.

Media contact: Caroline De Vaney 9327 8744 or 0408 927563 (media enquiries only).

Media release New South Wales

Falls prevention in construction

A campaign is now underway across Australia focusing on falls prevention in construction. During visits, inspectors will be checking to verify that falls prevention measures on site are appropriate.

This campaign has been initiated by the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities as falls from height continue to be a hazard that results in a significant number of deaths and injuries within the construction industry each year.

The following workplace safety authorities have joined forces to mount a coordinated campaign of inspector visits to construction sites in Australia:

Participating Safety Authorities

- ACT WorkCover
- ComCare
- NT WorkSafe
- SafeWork, SA
- WorkCover NSW
- Workplace Health & Safety, Queensland
- Workplace Standards Tasmania
- WorkSafe Victoria
- WorkSafe Western Australia

The campaign will run during February and March, involving visits to at least 900 sites. The construction sectors being targeted, during this particular campaign, are housing and small-scale general construction sites with a project value of up to \$3 million.

During the campaign, inspectors will pay particular attention to finish and fit-out work, roof work, bricklaying and rendering, as well as work associated with stairways or balconies.

The campaign's aim is to raise fall prevention awareness in the housing and small-scale general construction sector of the industry by providing advice and guidance material, and securing compliance through enforcement activities for high-risk safety concerns.

Advice on preventing falls from height on construction sites is freely available from WorkCover NSW and includes:

[Code of practice: Safe work on roofs, part 1, commercial and industrial buildings.](#)

[Code of practice: Safe work on roofs, part 2, residential buildings.](#)

[Safe working at heights 2006.](#)

[Safety guide: portable ladders.](#)

[Position paper: working off step ladders.](#)

[Requirement for scaffolding in NSW - policy statement.](#)

You can get copies from the WorkCover Assistance Service on 13 10 50, or visit your nearest WorkCover office. If you need further advice to improve health and safety at your worksite, phone 13 10 50.

The WorkCover NSW construction team can also run four-hour 'Managing for safety' workshops for small construction businesses to assist in developing work procedures and safe work method statements for businesses that work at heights please call 02 4321 5978.

News Release

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith

Acting Minister for Industrial Relations

Thursday, 17 January 2008

SAFETY CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT FALLS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

South Australia is joining workplace health and safety regulators across Australia to ensure that workplaces have appropriate measures in place to prevent falls in the construction industry.

SafeWork SA will focus on the housing and small-scale commercial building sectors, sending inspectors to about 80 sites in February and March this year.

Acting Industrial Relations Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says this is a priority area for SafeWork SA and its counterparts.

“Falls are the single-biggest cause of workplace injury and deaths in the construction industry,” she said.

“In the past three years there have been three deaths and 450 compensated injuries due to falls from height in South Australia’s construction sector.

“You don’t have to fall from a great height to be seriously, permanently or fatally injured.

“For the sake of those doing the job, their families and workmates, as well as your business, we urge employers and their staff to identify and control fall risks as soon as possible.

“All building trades which involve work at height should review their work procedures and if necessary, introduce safer systems before SafeWork inspectors visit.

“Builders, plasterers, plumbers, electricians, roof tilers and workers in similar trades are all at risk of serious injury if fall prevention measures are not taken.

“Don’t assume that because you’ve never had an injury that you’re working safely.

“Safety is a full time job and everyone needs to be constantly vigilant.”

SafeWork SA produces publications and guidance material, which is available in printed form or can be downloaded from its website at www.safework.sa.gov.au.

Help is also available from the Telephone Help Centre on 1300 365 255.

Media release Queensland

New Qld construction industry falls prevention campaign

Queensland is working with workplace health and safety regulators across Australia and New Zealand to target falls prevention in the construction industry, particularly small and medium-sized projects.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland General Manager Judy Bertram said site inspections would be carried out in February and March next year.

“Falls prevention is a priority focus area for Australia’s workplace safety authorities as they are the single biggest cause of workplace deaths in the construction industry,” Ms Bertram said.

“You don’t have to fall from a great height to be killed or end up in a wheel chair or with brain damage.

“For the sake of those doing the job, their families and workmates, as well as your business, fix falls risks now.

“We expect all building trades which work at height to review their work procedures and, if necessary, introduce safer systems of work before inspectors visit.”

Ms Bertram said builders, renderers, plumbers, electricians, roof tilers and other trades were at risk of serious injury if fall prevention measures were not taken.

“The past three years have seen two deaths and 1,675 compensated injuries due to falls from height in Queensland’s construction sector,” she said.

“Don’t assume that because you’re never had an injury you’ve working safely. It might just mean you’ve been lucky.”

Queensland workplace safety information is available online at <http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/index.htm>.

Generic media release 3 (Victorian version)

May 2008

WorkSafe hammers dangerous building sites

WorkSafe has warned builders that the level of safety found on Victorian housing and small commercial building sites, inspected during the recent HWSA national falls prevention in construction campaign, is unacceptable.

Victorian Inspectors observed such dangerous falls situations that they directed workers to immediately stop work on 13 occasions, issued 37 prohibiting notices, 26 improvement notices and had another 88 fall prevention issues rectified while they were onsite. Roof workers and carpenters were found to be most likely trades to be at risk of a fall.

“It’s extremely concerning that almost 60% of the 185 sites visited required inspectors to take compliance action to get them up to standard,” WorkSafe’s Executive Director, John Merritt, said.

“Everybody working in construction knows the industry can be dangerous, especially when working at height. Builders and subcontractors are well aware of the safety measures required for basic fall prevention, therefore there is no excuse for not providing and maintain them”.

Mr Merritt said, “Last financial year 13 Australian construction workers died after falling from height, 4 of those occurred in Victoria, also more than 620 workers are hospitalised every year in Australia due to a fall.

“Builders need to plan their work and ensure that the right safety equipment is provided, used and maintained in a serviceable condition.”

WorkSafe expects all builders and sub-contractors to comply with the health and safety requirements for falls prevention and our inspectors will continue to maintain a zero tolerance approach to enforce these requirements” Mr Merritt added.

Information on performing construction work safely at height be found on WorkSafe’s website www.worksafe.vic.gov.au and is available as both printed and electronic documents. This information is available from WorkSafe’s advisory service on 1800 136 089.

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Media contact: