



# Learning Event



## WORKING AT HEIGHT

### HAZARD

Physical  
(Person at height)

**Person Fall  
From Height**

### CONSEQUENCES

**Actual:** No harm to persons

**Potential:** This could have caused a permanent impairment

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF SCAFFOLDING COMPONENTS AND PREVENT FAILURES WHEN WORKING AT HEIGHT?

### What Happened?

A scaffolder was erecting a tube and clip scaffold and was working from two scaffold planks positioned at 2.4 metres above grade. The scaffolder was tied off to a scaffold ledger using two fall-arrest lanyards (limited free fall to 600mm) anchored 810mm above their feet. During the task, one of the scaffold planks failed, causing the scaffolder to fall. The fall arrest system activated and the scaffolder came to rest just above grade. The scaffolder was able to safely perform a self-rescue.

### Why did it Happen?

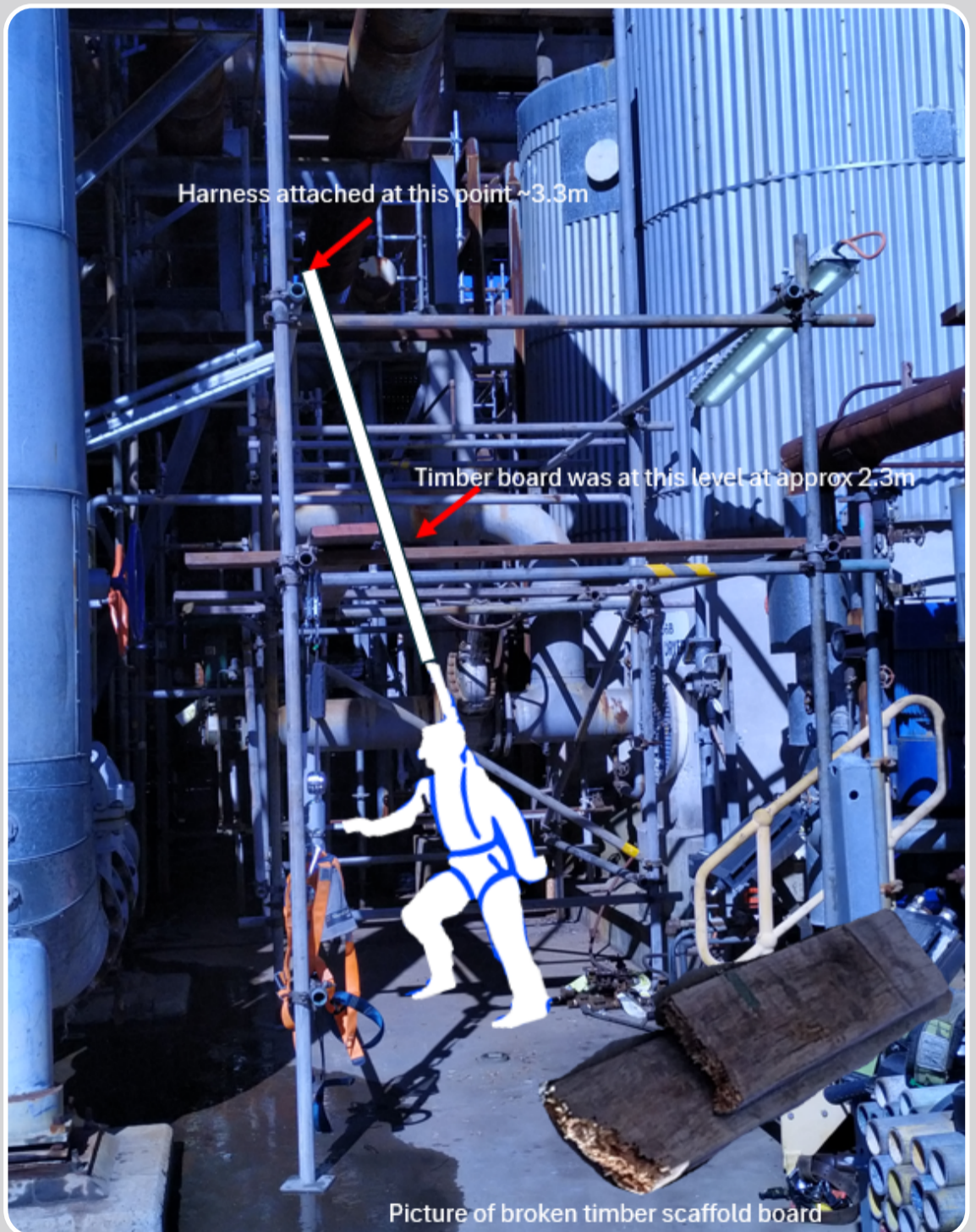
- Timber boards used for scaffolding were stored under cover but were exposed to humidity rising from the gravel ground cover underneath. The boards were used infrequently and were stored without spacers (fillets) between them, which resulted in moisture-related degradation and loss of strength.
- Storage requirements for timber scaffold boards were not included in procedures or work instructions.

### What did they Learn?

- Always store timber scaffold boards with spacers (fillets) or equivalent to enable air flow between the boards.
- Consult with Australian Standards and manufacturer's instructions for best storage and handling practices for scaffolding equipment.
- Ensure anchor points for fall arrest equipment are as high as possible to mitigate adverse consequences from equipment failure.

### IOGP Life-Saving Rules

- ✓ Inspect my fall protection equipment before use
- ✓ Tie off 100% to approved anchor points while outside a protected area



Picture of broken timber scaffold board

### Ask yourself or your Crew:

- How do you know that the working platforms and equipment you are using are fit for purpose and can take the required working loads?
- What could you and your team do differently to make sure stored materials are protected from moisture or other conditions that might cause hidden damage/deterioration?
- When setting up fall protection, how do you decide on the best anchor point to reduce the risk of serious injury if something fails?
- How confident are you that your PPE, such as your fall protection equipment, is in good condition and would perform as expected if something went wrong?

### Further information:



SCAN ME

Australian Standard:  
AS1577-1993 Scaffold  
Planks



SCAN ME

Safer Together:  
Assist & Assure



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