



Trip & Fall Accident - Trip Hazards and Mobile Phone Use

An Injured Person (IP) was walking along a scaffold deck and stepped through a 500mm gap between stored insulation materials and a scaffold standard. The scaffold deck is affixed with a "wedge head fitting" on this Plettac Metrix proprietary system scaffold with this component protruding 60mm above the deck around the standards. The IP tripped over the wedge head, fell forwards on to the same level, and sustained a fractured bone in their right hand and a hairline fracture to their right knee – RIDDOR reportable injuries.

What factors contributed to the incident?

- The IP was walking along the scaffold looking at work related photographs on their mobile phone when they tripped and therefore not paying full attention to underfoot conditions.
- Access along the scaffold had been reduced to a 500mm gap at the point of the accident due to stored insulation and the location of the scaffold standard.
- The wedge head fitting is a standard Plettac Metrix scaffold component and creates an inherent trip hazard albeit this would ordinarily be viewed as a negligible risk in most instances.

Action required by all projects

- Communicate this alert to all site users reminding all persons to use mobile phones and other mobile devices sensibly, standing still in a safe place.
- Aim to maintain at least 600mm wide access routes along scaffolds to reduce risks of slips or trips, in accordance with HSE guidelines.
- Reduce the volume of materials, equipment, tools etc. stored on scaffold decks where possible, limiting to shorter-term storage for only what is required for the task at hand, and avoid longer-term storage for future works in these locations.
- When planning work and procuring scaffolds, consider the design and type of scaffolds including the width of scaffold decks, and suitability for the work to be undertaken including material storage requirements and movement of people.

