

CSI Country Wide Case Study Safety Strategy Discussion

Construction Safety Investigator



Instructions

The objective of this tool is to provide field supervisors with information to proactively engage workers and discuss safety related concerns that they may encounter. Safety discussions should not be limited to the subject above and should pertain to the activities that workers will be involved in that may have the potential for safety related exposures.

Case Day:

October 2008

Accident Type:

Scaffold Collapse Accident – Improperly Tagged For Service

Relevant laws, rules and codes may include:

29CFR 1926.20(a)(1), 1926.21(b)(2), 1926.451(f)(3), & (f)(4), 1926.454

Case:

Two workers were seriously injured when the scaffold on which they were working collapsed.

Accident Detail:

The workers, employed by a masonry contractor, were hired to restore the brick facade of a building. A four-tier frame scaffold was erected along the length of the building. Each day the Foreman would inspect the scaffold and use a tag system to show that it was safe to be used. Green indicated a “Safe” condition while red indicated an “Unsafe” one.

On the day before the incident, a wind and rain storm had passed through the area damaging the scaffold. When the foreman arrived to inspect and noticed the damage, he quickly returned to the company’s storage yard to pick up replacement components to repair the scaffold.

When the two workers arrived, they did not see the foreman but saw the tag showing that it was safe for use. So as not to get behind on the days work, they climbed the scaffold to begin work before the foreman had returned. As they climbed to the third tier, the scaffold gave way and collapsed.

Reconstructive Safety Evaluation:

- What are some of the possible causes of the accident being discussed?
- What actions could have been taken that might have prevented this accident from occurring?

Accident Scene Conclusion:

The investigation revealed that the workers admitted they only noticed the color of the tag, which was green and did not read the date that it was completed. Once the foreman noticed the scaffold was damaged, he quickly left for replacement parts but failed to change the tag to red, indicating that is was unsafe for use.

Preventive Safety Measures Include:

- All operations are preplanned using a Job Safety Task Analysis (JSTA) to ensure potential safety hazards associated with an operation are identified and appropriate steps are taken to eliminate or control them.
- Workers should be trained in the hazards of the work they are to perform, the personal protective equipment and safe work procedures necessary to perform their assigned tasks.
- All scaffolds must be inspected by a Competent Person prior to each shift to ensure that it is safe for use.
- If damage or weakening is found so that strength is less than what is required for safe use, no work is allowed on it until repaired or replaced or it is removed from service.
- If a tagging or other system is used to identify scaffolding that has been inspected and found safe for use, ensure that the tags or other system is updated to reflect the current and actual condition of the scaffold.

Attendance Roster

Reference: This case is fictitious, and any resemblance to any persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. However, the type of accident described in this case summary happens all too often on construction sites.

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