

## **SAFETY ALERT**

# **Shared Learning's**

### **INCIDENT TITLE:**

Struck by falling gas detector while inspecting a Valve Tower

### **TIME AND DATE OF INCIDENT:**

24/05/2023

### **INCIDENT DETAIL :**

The inspection included the interior of the dam's valve tower, which necessitated climbing down several ladders to observe the condition of the valve tower. 2 DSI workers and one person from Watercare were entering the valve tower. Each person was wearing fall protection equipment, including full harness, and climbing hooks with lanyards, hard hats, hi-vis, and safety boots. A DSI worker went first and when he had finished descending the first segment, the Second DSI worker began my descent. This person was suddenly struck in the shoulder by a falling object, which turned out to be the gas meter of the Watercare person descending next. He had started descending before the second person was off the ladder and the gas detector (which had been clipped onto their harness) had come loose and fallen. 2 DSI workers were outside the structure as emergency/spotters.



### **INITIAL RESPONSE AND INVESTIGATION OUTCOMES :**

The worker that was struck by the gas detector was approx..6 metres below the last person (Watercare worker) down the ladder directly below the person. There was no injury. The potential drop was approx. 40 meters. (Height of the tower)

The works was stopped inside the structure, and it was decided that 1 person will climb down to the bottom before the next one climbs down.

A Learning teams was held to better understand what could have been done to stop an event like this to happen again. The Learning teams included the worker from Watercare. Everyone was trained in Heights work.

### **LEARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INCIDENT:**

During the Learning teams a picture was shared that shows the Watercare asset as a Tower inside a dam. The structure has a bridge walkway to the tower and an underground exit that is locked with gates from the bottom of the tower. There is an air flow in the Tower. Watercare classifies the Tower as a Working at Heights Hazard.

- 1, The HS Business partner believes that this structure is a Confined space entry due to a potential of engulfment and the complexness of a robust emergency plan.
2. There was a Time factor. The work had to get done in a set time frame. The workers felt rushed.
3. The rescue plan that was talked about was never recorded so there is doubt if the emergency rescue plan would have been robust enough to save 3 lives with 2 persons at the top of the structure with no rescue gear.
4. A reminder that this type of works is BAU for Watercare staff but not so much for DSI. Proper planning with a Site specific workplan should be done and recorded.
5. An exclusion zone should be allowed for at the bottom of the area where falling objects can potentially land.
6. The gas detector should be held in place in at least 2 places.
7. The person with the gas detector should always decent first.

### **PHOTO:**



The Corporate Safety and Health Team are currently working on systems to support the above learnings. If interested in viewing the full investigation report for this incident, it can be found in:

**MESH. EVE0000227**



**meridian**

