

Shared Learning

Dropped Objects | Rotten scaffold plank edge allowed spanner to fall through

What happened?

Whilst undertaking maintenance work from an approved and ticketed scaffold, a spanner was kicked backwards, slipping under a kickboard and falling through a damaged scaffold plank. The plank was rotten on the edge and the kickboard was 40mm above the plank at the far end (not installed level).

The damaged plank forming part of this scaffold had not been picked up during the sign off and not found during prestart checks by the maintenance crew.

The spanner fell 5m to the ground below.

All other scaffolds checked immediately for compliance.

What did we learn?

It is commonplace to check scaffolds for compliance by finding the safety tag signed off by an appropriate supervisor based on trust and experience of that supervisor. There have been times where damaged or rusty equipment has still been used either from complacency or modifications within the scaffold that has not prompted another supervisor check. Maintenance crews should undertake additional checks on their work areas to ensure all equipment is intact and report any damages they see.

Additionally, even when working from a relatively secure platform at height, it still pays to have lanyards on tools to cover all eventualities

