

Sydney blitz highlights unsafe practices

A building site 'blitz' by SafeWork in New South Wales, Australia, last month, revealed that more than 20 percent of sites visited had working at height risks, while two thirds required intervention on unsafe practices. The blitz followed a case in which solar energy installer, PV Solar Pro, was fined \$300,000 for failing to comply with its duties after a 19 year old apprentice fell 6.5 metres through a skylight. An investigation found his harness fall arrest system was incorrectly set to arrest the fall. He suffered a severe brain injury, dying from the injury two weeks later.

SafeWork executive director, Tony Williams, said: "In last month's blitz, SafeWork inspectors visited 165 construction sites and issued 273 notices and 16 fines relating to unsafe workplaces. Falls from heights are the number one killer on NSW construction sites and most people who are seriously injured or killed fall from a height of four metres or less."

"In May an apprentice carpenter fell three metres while installing roof trusses in Moama, while this month a man fell from a second storey roof in Woodcroft. Both were airlifted to hospital with suspected spinal injuries. Sooner or later SafeWork will be in your area and I'm urging you to take action in order to remove these risks – not just because you are facing fines but so that everyone on your site goes home safely at the end of the day."

Tower error costs £23k

UK based TA Knox Shopfitters has been fined £18,000, plus costs of £4,623, after an employee fell five metres from a scaffold tower while working at the Trafford Centre, Manchester in October 2019. The employee was working from the tower when it shifted and threw him off balance, causing him to fall backwards against an improperly fitted guardrail, which gave way leaving him to fall to the ground. He fractured 10 ribs and his shoulder, as well as suffering a collapsed lung. An investigation found that the tower had not been erected by someone with the appropriate skills, knowledge and training.

HSE inspector Seve Gomez-Aspron said: "The risks associated with work at height are well known. This incident could easily have been avoided by ensuring suitable and sufficient edge protection had been used and qualified people had been on site to erect the tower."

Who trained him?

Spotted somewhere in France earlier this year – it really speaks for itself.

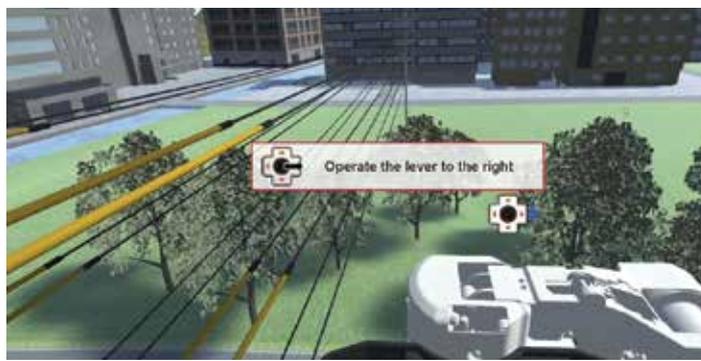


Ultra-realistic VR training scenarios

Tadano has started using high definition 8K videos to deliver a more realistic and immersive Virtual Reality training experience for its cranes and aerial platforms. This level of realism is said to heighten the senses as users become fully immersed in their scenarios, creating the truest of life reactions.

"I was scared," said one trainee. "I felt like I was actually working on the top of a really tall crane and my hand was caught in a wire, it felt quite realistic. I knew it was safe but still had cold sweat. I felt like I was at the scene of the accident, and my hands were involved in a wire rope. It was an easy to understand and valuable experience. This method gives a more realistic experience than ones through traditional video and documents."

Another trainee added: "I had experience of working on site, but it still had an unexpected and lasting impact on me. The simulated accident remained in my head, which is why I think it can work greatly with our pursuit of safety."



Wrong access equipment costs £22k

Grayton Building Contractors has been fined £15,000, plus costs of £3,742, after an employee fell from a ladder while descending from a scaffold. In June 2018, the man was fitting fascia boards on a single storey home, in preparation for roofers employed by Thomas Dean to begin work. The man stepped across a gap to the ladder that slipped sideways causing him to fall. He was off work for eight weeks.

An HSE investigation found that both Grayton and Thomas Dean failed to properly plan the work, assess the risks or provide appropriate supervision. The access equipment used was also not suitable for the job. Dean was fined £400 and ordered to pay costs of £3,000.

HSE inspector Andy McGrory said: "This incident could have easily been prevented with simple precautions including properly planning the work, undertaking a suitable risk assessment and by selecting, erecting and using suitable work at height equipment for the job."