

Safety Alert 013

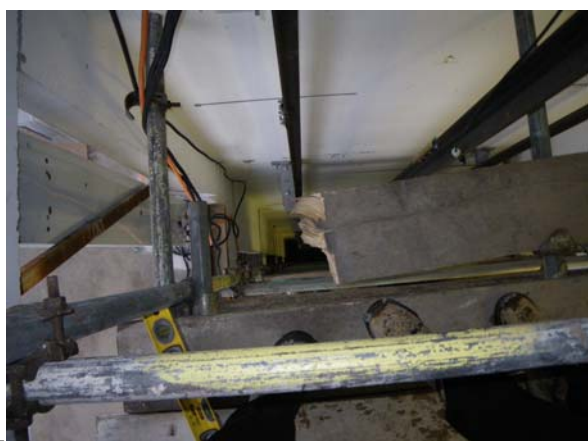


Scaffold Board Failure

An incident occurred on one of our sites recently where a lift installer was working on a scaffold board installing lift equipment inside a lift shaft when a scaffold board failed.

The board snapped whilst the installer was standing on it and the consequences of the potential 15m fall could easily have been fatal. As it was, the installer fell 2m onto a working platform below and suffered injured ribs.

As a part of the investigation the board was inspected by an expert who concluded that the cause of failure was that the timber contained a very pronounced slope of grain in the region of the break.



There is a British Standard relating to Scaffold Boards, BS 2482: 2009. This requires a number of elements to be graded, and only then can the board be rated to the British Standard, which is signified by the bands at the end of the board having reference to the British Standard (Usually having the mark BS2482).

The board in this case did not have the British Standard marking and is what is commonly known as a 'Grade A' board.

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This grade of board is not subject to the requirements of BS2482 and therefore would have never been inspected for any potential strength defects.

Upon further investigation and anecdotal evidence it seems that there a great number of these ungraded boards in circulation, and being used on our sites.

These ungraded, and potentially unsafe boards (if our experiences outlined earlier provide a picture) are in use on our sites without us realising the full extent of the likelihood of failure and leaving us open to the possibility of further incidents.

Recommendations:

- **Check if the scaffold boards on your site conform to BS 2482**
- **Consider exchanging any non BS 2482 grade boards with the appropriate BS 2482 grade boards**
- **Consider including the provision of scaffold boards to BS2482 only in any contract for scaffold supply / erection of scaffolding. Prohibit the use of non BS2482 boards if this is included**
- **Where the scaffold supply falls into the package of a sub-contractor, consider their requirement to only use BS 2482 graded boards**
- **Boards should not be used as a part of a working platform if they are damaged, cracked or have notches cut out of them.**
- **Boards should be inspected prior to being put into use and at regular intervals whilst in use**