Fatal Fall from Scaffold



A worker died of a broken neck and skull after he fell 23 feet from a scaffold. He was working part-time as a welder-fitter. He did not have experience in working from a scaffold.

Another worker had moved the scaffold into place, but it was not directly under the overhead crane which was to be repaired, so the welder had to lean out from the scaffold to work.

The welder was not wearing a safety helmet because it did not fit with his welder’s mask. Nor was he wearing fall prevention or fall arrest equipment, although co-workers had advised him to do so. Supervisory staff had not enforced the need for him to wear a safety harness, so he had not put one on.

Any time you are doing a new job, or working under new conditions, know the safety procedures and equipment. Even if you are experienced at your job, new working conditions bring new hazards. It is also important to make sure new workers and part-timers in your work area get the benefit of the same safety training as experienced employees and full-timers to prevent tragedies such as this. Supervisors should always enforce the wearing of personal protective equipment, not just because it is the rule, but for the protection of the worker.