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Naval Facilities Engineering Command

Safety Lessons Learned Accident Abstract

Accident Type: Fall From a Different Level
Injury: Head Injury
Damage: None
Equipment Involved: Scaffold Built-in Ladder
Type Of Work: Wall Gang Form

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT:

A supervisor tasked an employee to dismantle the existing access way inside a tank. While in the tank, employee was asked by a co-worker outside the tank to retrieve a tag line on a scaffold system. Employee ascended from the right side of the scaffold access ladder onto the top platform. Upon ascending onto the top platform, employee grabbed the tag line and dropped it onto the bottom of the tank. Employee then proceeded to descend from the left side of the scaffold. While descending, from the scaffold access ladder, employee lost his balance/grip and fell approximately fifteen (15) feet onto a concrete surface resulting in a head injury.

DIRECT CAUSE:

- Employee lost balance and grip and fell from the scaffold access ladder while descending.

INDIRECT CAUSE:

- Although the AHA for this definable feature of work (installation of radius wall gang forms), was available and communicated prior to commencement of work, principal steps relative to scaffolding was not addressed
- The scaffold system used (frame type) was not erected IAW the manufacturer's recommendations
- Employee failed to recognize existing and predictable hazard (fall from different level)
- Lack of a heightened sense of awareness when descending from heights

ROOT CAUSE

- Scaffold and associated components were not inspected and certified for use by a Competent Person

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Ensure that safe work practices and Operational Risk Management (ORM) principles are incorporated, communicated and enforced to all affected employees
- Fall hazards and specific controls relative to scaffolds and their components must be clearly addressed as a principle step in the AHA
- Prior to the commencement of any work activity, all affected personnel must review, acknowledge and carry out the specific contents outlined in the accepted AHA and shall demonstrate an understanding of the AHA
- Site Safety and Health Officer along with the first line supervisor must be more vigilant and strictly enforce safety requirements
- Competent Person(s) must thoroughly inspect all scaffolds, components, and personal fall protection equipment prior to each use
- Assure that design and construction of scaffolds conform with ANSI A10.8 and manufacture's recommendations
- Provide appropriate training for all workers who use any type of scaffolds or fall protection equipment

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