

Scottish Construction Safety Group

Minutes of the meeting of the 21st of March 2019

There were 22 members and guests present at the meeting. Roddy McLean introduced Richard Cassidy and Paul Mullholland from BrandSafway / Lyndon SGB who gave a scaffolding awareness presentation.

Richard and Paul gave an introduction to scaffolding and the related legislation, mainly the Work at Height Regulations. The main responsibilities of the duty holders in these regs were identified with the focus being on planning the work, Paul suggested that early involvement with scaffolding contractors allows for better planning to meet this duty and also better results. Early involvement will also allow time for specific designs which can take 2 weeks (required if any more than a 'basic' scaffold) and application for any permits that may be required which can take 4 weeks. The planning should also include preparation of the area prior to the erection of scaffolding as a stable surface of sufficient strength for the scaffold structure is required, all scaffolding contractors should (and most will) refuse to start work without a suitable surface on which to construct the scaffolding. As well as the ground conditions a pre scaffold site inspection should, as a minimum, cover the nature of the supporting structure (stability, suitability for anchors and obstructions), access, space available (for erection of scaffolding and for storage) and potential for damage (wind funnelling, vehicle movement etc.)

Unless a scaffold is a basic configuration described in recognised guidance e.g. TG20, the scaffold should be designed by calculation, by a competent person, to ensure it will have adequate strength and stability. All scaffolding is to be erected, dismantled and altered in accordance with either SG4 or the manufacturers' erection guide for system scaffolds. TG20-13 is the current revision of the guidance for tube and fitting scaffolding, TG20 is reviewed every 5 years and the next revision was due last year but has been delayed and should be released later this year.

When a scaffold is incomplete warning signs and a physical means of preventing access should be in place and alterations to scaffolding should only be by those competent to carry out the alterations.

The items to be considered when identifying the requirements of a scaffold were detailed, these are; what is needed, the purpose of the scaffold, tasks it is to be used for, sequencing (who needs to use it, when and their specific needs), access (stairs are always the preferred option) and platform heights (including the sequence of works, restrictions, use of hop-ups etc.). These are important to ensure that it is fit for purpose and the amount of alterations required are minimised.

The effects of wind on a scaffold should always be considered and the area of the country as well as the local topography of the area will determine the maximum height for each load class of scaffolding. Any requirements for cladding, sheeting or netting of scaffolding must have a specific design and therefore must be specified to the scaffolding contractor at an early stage as this will need to be included in the design.

Competencies for companies and individuals were discussed. The industry body is NASC and scaffolding contractors are audited before they are able to gain membership, therefore members are able to show that they meet the requirements. Non NASC registered companies can still use and follow NASC guidance and may be able to demonstrate their competency but this may require more scrutiny and therefore it would be beneficial to encourage scaffolding contractors to become NASC members if they are not already. Individual competencies are demonstrated through the CISRS card scheme, this is affiliated to and of a similar standard to the more general CSCS scheme. A variety of

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CISRS cards are available from scaffolding labourer and trainee through to advanced scaffolder and scaffolding supervisor. It was noted that the scaffolding supervisor card requires completion of training similar to the SSSTS qualification but specific to scaffolding and can be considered as an alternative to SSSTS when supervising scaffolding works, at the moment there are only around 1400 scaffold supervisor card holders in the UK partly due to it not being accepted by many as an alternative to SSSTS.

The importance of ties or alternative support such as raking shores or buttresses was highlighted. Unless otherwise specified in the design, ties should be positioned every other lift and every 2 bays and 1 in 20 (or a minimum of 3) should be pull tested by a competent person and noted on the handover cert. If attachment to the building or structure is not possible or impractical then buttresses or shores can be used but these can take up much more space and therefore limit access.

Access to scaffolding should be by stair towers wherever possible, if not possible then the following hierarchy should be followed; ladder access bays with single lift ladder, ladder access bays with multiple lift ladders, internal ladder access with a protected ladder trap and finally, external ladder access using a ladder gate. When ladders are used they should extend a maximum of 2 lifts without a break.

All public protection walkways, fans and netting need to be designed and must consider to work being carried out to allow the correct level of protection to be calculated in the design.

Inspections of scaffolding must be carried out as detailed in Regulations 12 & 13 of the Work at Height Regulations, the first inspection before the scaffolding is put into use is covered by the handover certificate, as the site manager will now be responsible for the scaffolding from this point on they should take the opportunity to have a walk over with the scaffolder and ensure they are satisfied with what they are accepting. Regular inspections are then required at a frequency of no more than 7 days and following any exceptional circumstances that could affect its stability, these can be carried out by the scaffolding contractor who erected the scaffold but this will not normally be included in the contract and it is the responsibility of the site manager to ensure this is carried out. Non scaffolders can obtain a separate qualification for basic scaffold inspection but this will require evidence of experience to obtain the CISRS competency card. Competent scaffolders will have received the training and experience of inspection as part of their regular competency so will not require the separate scaffold inspection competency card. The scaffold inspection should be a written report covering the requirements of Schedule 7 of the Work at Height Regs and should be kept on site until the work is complete and then at an office of the Principal Contractor for a further 3 months.

Richard and Paul ask any members to contact them if would like any further information or advice.

Roddy thanked Richard and Paul before moving on to other business.

A new Principal Inspector is due to start with the HSE out of the Edinburgh office.

The Group is looking for assistance from any member who would like to devote some time to assisting the industry.

Dates of forthcoming meetings in the Hilcroft Hotel Whitburn at 13:30 are

18/4/19 A discussion on the Group

23/5/19

Speakers will be announced in due course.

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