Shared Learning

The Thameslink Programme Issue Date: 18th May 2016 - For further info contact sharon.fink@networkrail.co.uk

Issue Number: TLP055 Title: Mobile Scaffold Tower Blown Over

Overview of Event:

On 2nd March 2016, a four metre high mobile scaffold tower (MST) was blown over by high winds. The MST was not in use at the time of the incident and was freestanding in a works and storage area. When the MST fell towards the ground it struck a freestanding "A" Frame tube and fitting scaffold, (being used as edge protection) and then struck an operative causing a small cut to his ear, before striking him on the shoulder. The IP was wearing full PPE including his safety helmet when the falling MST struck him.

The site had experienced some localised strong winds during the morning and early afternoon that day. Information obtained from the met office, post accident stated that storm Jake hit the United Kingdom on this particular day.

General Key Messages:

- **Storage arrangements:** plant, equipment and materials storage should be considered during the planning stages of the works to determine locations of storage and any specific controls required
- **Weather conditions:** teams should consider how they are made aware of changing weather conditions and the impact that this could have on the site to allow appropriate controls to be implemented

Photo of Event :

Photo showing position of scaffold after it blew over (the A frame can be seen to the right hand side of the photo)

Actions Taken As a Result of the Investigations:

- A "safe start – safe finish" process has been introduced, with Supervisors appointed to specific work areas
- Daily planning meetings and morning briefings to review weather forecast for the day ahead and discuss and agree site operations that could be affected by high winds or other extreme weather.
- Training matrix reviewed to identify any gaps associated with PASMA Training.
- Hand held anemometers that provide accurate current wind speed data on site have been purchased and issued to key site supervisors and managers.

Causes:

Immediate Cause - High squally winds caught the MST, applying an excessive wind loading, which caused the MST to become unstable and fall over.

Root and Underlying Causes -
Evidence showed that although the MST remained erected it was not used as a working platform after the 2nd Feb 2016. The scaffold tower tag showed that it as still 'OK to use', however but should have been taken out of use.

The area where the MTS blew over was a worksite used as a storage area for plant and materials. At the time of the accident formwork shuttering was being dismantled.

Outriggers were not in deployed for considerable periods (not when in use but when left standing)

During interviews conducted for this investigation the site supervisors confirmed they used their experience and judgement when considering the impact of wind on site activities. There was no Anemometer situated on site to accurately measure wind speeds.