

Lessons Learnt from Significant Events



Date: 9th May 2013

Issued By: Thameslink Programme, HSEA Team, James Forbes House, 27 Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0NS

Issue Number: TLP 006

Title: High winds cause falling equipment (x 2 events on Thameslink)

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Overview of Event 1:

On the 22nd March 2013, whilst deconstructing the protection deck above the London Bridge Station platforms in windy conditions, an operative's hard-hat blew off his head and fell over the edge of the protection deck. It then hit the roof of a train before landing on a live platform where train passengers were disembarking. The hard hat did not hit anybody and no-one was injured.



Underlying Causes:

 There are a number of underlying factors that contributed to the incident:

- The WPP and TBS did identify the wind to be a risk for the removal of materials at height however no consideration had been taken for the effect on PPE.
- Chin straps were not worn in windy conditions and this had not been identified as a potential risk as part of the risk assessment
- Debris netting was in place to prevent materials falling however the height was not sufficient to prevent material blowing over the top.

Overview of Event 2:

During general construction activity on the upper level of the building being constructed at 11-15 Borough High Street, a Gazebo structure being used for dust suppression whilst cutting granite stone at roof level was caught by a gust of wind causing a section of the metal frame to fall over the edge of the roof and fall over 15m into the site compound below. Fortunately there were no injuries to personnel or the public.



Underlying Causes:

 There are a number of underlying factors that contributed to the incident:

- Failure of the Supervisor and operatives involved in the task to take into consideration windy weather conditions
- The use of the gazebo was not suitable for a construction site in an open and exposed area
- The method of work was outside of what was detailed in the WPP and TBS

Key Messages:

- Where a risk of falling materials is present then adequate protection must be in place, including the need for exclusion zones as appropriate
- Where materials are at risk of being affected by the weather conditions, then suitable controls should be employed to provide An appropriate restraint to prevent materials
- Hard hats should be fitted with chin straps that should be worn when working at height when weather conditions increase the risk
- The erection of tented structures that could act as a 'sail' in adverse weather conditions must be fully risk assessed for suitability prior to use