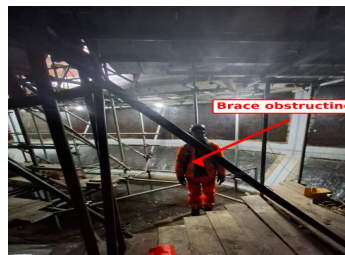


ALERT TOPIC	Unsafe Access – Fall from Sloped Surface Due to Obstructed Scaffold Access	ALERT REFERENCE:	CRL
TARGET AUDIENCE:	Regional Managers, Site Managers Site Engineers and Supervisors Other interested people	AUTHORISED BY:	C Donahue
DATE OF ISSUE	Sunday 1 March 2026	DISPLAY UNTIL:	March 2027

INTRODUCTION



An incident occurred on Sunday 1 March 2026 during remedial repair works inside Horstead Water Tower.

The works involved accessing defects at low level within the structure using an internal scaffold system that had been adapted to suit earlier phases of the project.

During the task, a supervisor descended from the scaffold to inspect a defect located at the base of the tower. Whilst moving towards the work area, the supervisor deviated from the scaffold access route and traversed the sloped structural base of the tower, which has an approximate gradient of 45 degrees.

Whilst crossing this surface, the supervisor lost footing and fell backwards, injuring his arm and striking his head on a fixed steel brace after his hard hat became dislodged.

Further investigation identified that scaffold adaptations had adversely impacted access arrangements at the work location. The configuration of the scaffold, including the positioning of bracing, hindered a clear and practical access route to the defect area which may have influenced the injured person's decision to traverse the sloped structural base of the tower.

It was also identified that the remedial works being undertaken were associated with damage sustained during previous scaffold modification activities, which necessitated the repair works at the base slab.

These factors are considered to have influenced the decision to deviate from the scaffold access route.

The injuries sustained were minor; however, the incident was fully preventable.

REASON FOR ISSUING THIS ALERT

To inform people of the incident for shared learning. If access isn't right, don't make it work — stop and raise it.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION POINTS

- Scaffold design and any subsequent adaptations must ensure that safe, clear and practical access routes are maintained at all times
- Diagonal bracing and temporary works arrangements must be reviewed to ensure they do not obstruct access or force operatives into unsafe alternative routes
- Structural surfaces, particularly those with significant gradients, must not be used as access routes under any circumstances
- Where access to a work area is restricted, unclear or unsuitable, work must stop and be reassessed before continuing
- Any additional or remedial works must trigger a review of access arrangements, risk assessments and method statements
- Daily briefings must clearly identify access routes, hazards and any changes to working conditions
- Operatives must feel confident to challenge unsafe conditions and exercise their right to stop work without pressure
- All head injuries must be reported immediately and medically assessed, regardless of severity
- CRL operates a no-blame culture – raising concerns helps prevent incidents and protects everyone on site

All operatives are encouraged to utilise the CRL Observation App to report any unsafe conditions or access concerns — early reporting helps prevent incidents.

