

DATE

March 27, 2017

The incident

Two contractor employees were working in a building under construction. At some moment in time, they needed to do some work on height, but they didn't have the tools to do so. They decided to ask employees of another on-site contractor if they could use their mobile scaffold tower. They were told that they could do so and moved the platform to the site where it was needed. Shortly after the two had climbed onto the top platform (approx. 2 metres), the scaffold collapsed. One of the employees suffered minor injuries, the other suffered a fractured wrist.

Investigation showed that the mobile scaffold tower had collapsed because it had been wrongly erected. Instead of two diagonal crossbars, only two crossbars were used. Moreover, these were not fixed crosswise, but parallel. The scaffold was therefore unable to withstand the weight of the two workers and collapsed. There was no user manual with the mobile scaffold tower and it hadn't been inspected annually.

The Tripod Beta analysis

The incident was analysed using Tripod Beta. The diagram of the analysis is shown below. Read from left to right, the trios give a chronological overview of the events leading to the accident (the last trio is superfluous in view of the Tripod convention as there are no (failed or missing) barriers that could have prevented the employees being injured, but it is shown here for a good understanding of the event). Also, the broken barriers are shown, with direct causes, preconditions and underlying causes.

More information about the Tripod Beta method can be found on the [website of the Tripod Beta Foundation](#).

Disclaimer

The incident described above is fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons or companies is purely coincidental.