



LESSONS LEARNED / BEST PRACTICE

Title:	2020/02 - Coordinating Interfacing Operations
What Happened?	
<p>On 10th January 2020, Balfour Beatty circulated a safety alert following a tragic incident at the National Buried Infrastructure Facility site at the University of Birmingham three days earlier.</p> <p>Two individuals working for a subcontractor were injured in a fall from height. Tragically, one suffered fatal injuries. The scissor lift they were working from was struck by an overhead travelling crane operated by a third-party contractor engaged by the client, causing it to topple over.</p>	
Why it Happened?	
<p>It would appear that the workers were tragically injured as the result of a breakdown in arrangements for coordinating interfacing operations.</p>	
Immediate Learnings	
<p>Investigations are underway. Meanwhile, all of the contractor's projects and site leaders were instructed to take immediate steps to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All operations are reviewed in light of this alert and that effective safe systems of work and arrangements are in place for coordination of interfacing activities, and for their monitoring and supervision. This includes the provision of competent supervision by all subcontractors. • Communications between the principal contractor, supply chain and the client must be clear, consistent and regular to aid collaboration and to ensure safety is prioritised. • Any overhead travelling crane or gantry crane is isolated and locked off with a formal 'permit to work' safe system whenever any activity is undertaken at height and there is potential for collision (for example, when using a scissors lift, MEWP, tower scaffold etc.). • Where acting as Principal Contractor, there must be a clear and documented understanding of the entity who has full control of the site and its boundaries, with authority to stop works. • All duty holders including clients have a duty to cooperate and coordinate interfacing work activities and to communicate information effectively. • Everyone is aware of their responsibilities. 	
Recommendations	
<p>This safety alert serves as a terrible reminder that we all have a part to play to be vigilant, including where there is the potential for collisions. Safety is always the priority, no matter the circumstances. Any pressure or perceived pressure to accelerate works which could compromise safety must be escalated. Balfour Beatty outlined their 'Golden Rules' as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Be fit for work 2) Always receive a briefing before starting work 3) Report all unsafe events and conditions 4) Stop work if anything changes. 	