



June 26 — Close Enough to Get Hurt

Employee was near scaffolding while other persons were on it working and a bolt was dropped near employee	Asked employee to stay clear of other working on scaffold to prevent being struck by falling objects!
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Most people don't stand under a falling object on purpose.

They simply don't realize they're standing in the wrong place.

An employee was working near a scaffold where other employees were actively performing work overhead. During the task, a bolt was dropped from the scaffold and landed near the employee below.

Fortunately, no one was injured.

The employee was immediately instructed to stay clear of the area while overhead work was taking place to reduce the risk of being struck by falling objects.

Incidents like this are a reminder that hazards aren't limited to the people performing the work. Sometimes the greatest risk exists for those working nearby. A dropped bolt may seem insignificant while it's sitting in a tool pouch or lying on a platform. Once it falls from elevation, however, even a small object can become a serious hazard.

One of the challenges with line-of-fire exposures is that employees often become comfortable working around ongoing activities. If overhead work has been taking place for hours without an issue, it's easy to assume the area is safe. Unfortunately, dropped object incidents only need to happen once to cause an injury.

This observation also highlights the importance of maintaining awareness of nearby work activities. Before entering an area, take a moment to look up, look around, and identify what other tasks are taking place. The safest route isn't always the shortest route, especially when overhead work is involved.

In this case, the dropped bolt served as a warning. The next falling object may not miss.

Hazards

- Struck by hazard
- Falling objects
- Head and face injuries
- Line of fire exposure
- Overhead work activities
- Inadequate exclusion zones

Words of Wisdom

When work is taking place above you, always assume that tools, materials, or debris have the potential to fall. Respect barricades, exclusion zones, and overhead work warnings.

Pause and Think

- What overhead work activities take place in your area?
- How can you identify line-of-fire hazards before entering a work zone?
- Why do employees sometimes become comfortable working near overhead operations?
- What controls should be in place when work is occurring above others?
- What could have happened if the bolt had struck the employee?

Closing Thought

Being close to the work doesn't mean you need to be close to the hazard.