

JULY 2023

CFMEU SAFETY ALERT COLUMN REINFORCEMENT CAGE

FOLLOWING THE TRAGIC FATALITY OF A WORKER STRUCK BY A FALLING COLUMN REINFORCEMENT CAGE, THE CFMEU HIGHLIGHTS THE FOLLOWING IN RELATION TO THE INCIDENT.

On 5th of July 2023, at the John Hunter Hospital Project, a 20 year old worker was struck by a falling prefabricated column reinforcement cage. The reinforcement cage weighed approximately 1700kg and had a height of 7.7m. The injury was fatal.

Investigations so far reveal:

- No exclusion zones were in place to manage the risk of other workers in the area who were performing excavation works for inground services in the fall zone of the reinforcement cage. The deceased male was operating an excavator in the area when the cage fell.
- The reinforcement cage along with three other cages on the same gridline were left standing, without having column boxes installed and not braced to manufacturer's specification, on 8 x n24 starter bars which were protruding from below the pile cap by approximately 1460mm. The cage was secured only by tie wire after being vertically lifted into position by a Tower Crane.
- No measures were implemented to mitigate the risk of falling objects and or structural collapse of building elements.

Further contributing factors include:

- Failure to program activities onsite without risk to employees and to provide direct adequate supervision onsite to control the risk of falling objects.
- Incorrect installation method of reinforcement cage, including the use of aspro blocks and structural steel nuts as packers to support free standing reinforcement cages.
- Column boxes were not installed and braced once the cages were installed. There was a failure to follow construction sequence that was developed in the risk assessment process.

The site remains subject to a prohibition notice.



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