

HSE ALERT

DATE: March 13, 2009

Rope Failure and Contract Employee Injury

CONTACT:

Incident Description:

On March 9, a contract employee working on the Project experienced a broken shoulder blade and lumbar vertebrae when a scaffold truss weighing approximately 160 pounds and 21 feet long fell approximately 16 feet to grade striking the employee on the back after hitting the ground. The employee was transported via Life Flight to Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston. He is expected to make a full recovery.

The crew was attempting to hoist the truss to an elevation of approximately 40 feet in order to erect a scaffold above the pipe rack. Manila rope was being used to pull the truss to the elevated platform when the rope broke.

Initial Findings:

- The rope being used to hoist the truss failed due to the weight of the truss. In new condition, the rope is rated for nearly four times the weight of the truss. However, the rope was in very poor condition and likely failed due to dry rot.
- The injured employee, while not directly under the load, was within the “fall radius” of the truss when the rope failed allowing the truss to strike him.



Remedial Actions:

- Ensure that barricaded areas account for loads which may bounce or topple over to a larger area than directly under the load. In this case, the truss was 21 feet long.
- Consider alternate material handling methods, such as cranes/material baskets, which would allow personnel to remain a farther distance from lift areas.
- We will be reviewing expectations and written procedures for rope inspections and material handling in order to prevent a similar occurrence in the future.