



SAFETY HAZARD ALERT

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT SUMMARY

FAILURE TO ALUMINIUM PREFABRICATED STAIR UNIT



Date Issued 18 July 2006

This hazard alert is issued to inform persons involved in working with, or on scaffold access stairs (of the prefabricated aluminium type) and all persons that are responsible for supply and installation, including inspection of scaffold on the job, or inspection of scaffold prior to supply.

BACKGROUND

ACT WorkCover has investigated a dangerous occurrence involving the failure of a prefabricated aluminium stair unit. The investigation into the cause of the stair failure found that cracks had occurred in the edge of the stair landing and although these cracks had been found and subsequently repaired the aluminium weld had failed.

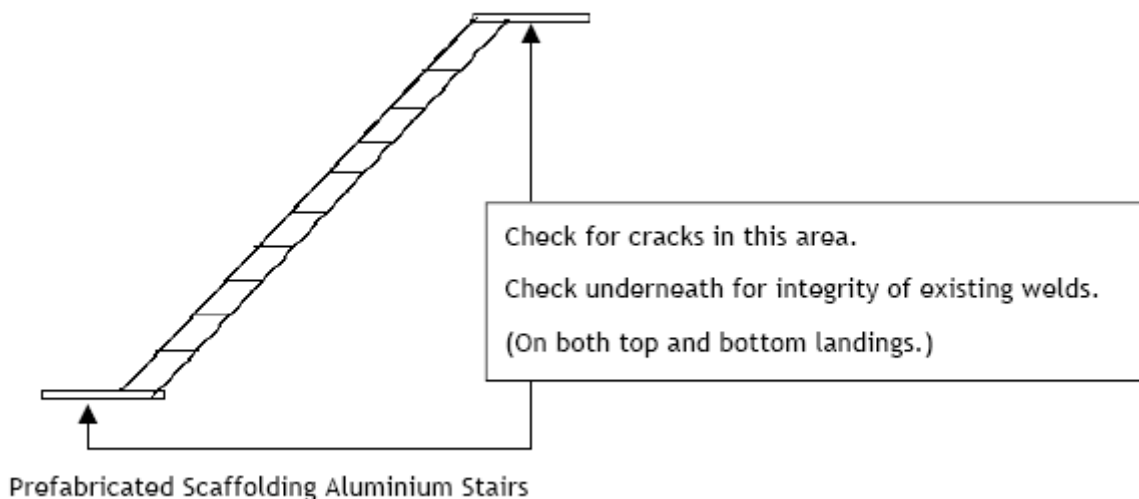
This failure had allowed enough flex to occur in the top and bottom landings of the aluminium prefabricated stair unit to allow the stair unit to become dislodged from the transom and subsequently fall to the level below.



PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Ensure that any welding of Aluminium Stair Units complies with AS 1655 (Welding of Aluminium Structures) as per AS/NZS 1576 Scaffolding Part 1 (General Requirements).
- Businesses that hire out aluminium stair units must ensure that each unit is inspected for defects between each hiring and leasing to ensure no unsafe units are supplied for use.
- Check to ensure that there are no: bent stair treads; bent stringers; broken or bent pins; broken welds; and that the assembly is not twisted.
- Holders of certificates of competency. Scaffolders have important responsibilities to visually inspect scaffolding equipment for faults prior to installation.
- Rejected scaffolding equipment should be isolated by clear marking or tagging, or placing in containers or areas that are clearly designated for the storage of rejected equipment.
- Records of tests, maintenance, inspections and alterations should be kept and made available upon request.





DUTIES UNDER THE ACT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT 1989

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989 (the Act)* imposes a duty of care on all parties to take all reasonably practical steps to ensure that plant and equipment used in the workplace presents no risks to health or safety. Refer to:

- section 37 (Duties of employers in relation to employees)
- section 38 (Duties of employers in relation to third parties)
- section 39 (Duties of people in control of workplaces)
- section 40 (Duties of employees)
- section 41 (Duties of self-employed people)
- section 42 (Duties of manufacturers in relation to plant and substances)
- section 43 (Duties of suppliers in relation to plant and substances)
- section 44 (Duties of people erecting or installing plant in workplace).

Penalties exist for breaches of *the Act*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Further details are available from the National Standard for Plant [NOHSC:1010(1994)] which is a Code of Practice in the ACT, and AS/NZ Standard 1576 Scaffolding.

For further information and advice on workplace health and safety issues, contact ACT WorkCover on 6205 0200 or see the ACT WorkCover web site www.workcover.act.gov.au. Check for cracks in this area. Check underneath for integrity of existing welds. (On both top and bottom landings.)

PRINT THIS LEAFLET AND PLACE IT ON YOUR NOTICE BOARD AT WORK



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Your Rights At Work website - <http://www.rightsatwork.com.au/>

Tune in to Workers Radio Sydney 88.9FM Weekdays 6.00am – 9:00am

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