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INFORMATION SHEET

Secure construction sites to prevent tragedy

Ensuring your construction site is secure during the summer holiday period is an essential step in preventing a tragedy, according to WorkCover NSW.

Under NSW workplace safety laws, construction sites are required to have adequate site security, including appropriate fencing.

General Manager of WorkCover's Work Health and Safety Division, John Watson, said construction sites must be fenced off to prevent unauthorised access during the Christmas and New Year shut down. "Unsecured construction sites can pose significant risks to members of the public, especially children," Mr Watson said.

"We're reminding controllers of construction sites to ensure they are adequately secured during the Christmas break.

"Building sites around residential areas pose a heightened risk, particularly as there are more children in the vicinity due to the school holidays.

"It is also essential not to overlook excavation areas that can fill with water and pose a potential drowning risk, such as pits, trenches and pier holes."

From 2006-2010 more than 40 infringement notices were issued in relation to unauthorised persons accessing construction sites.

Before shutting down the site for the holiday period, site controllers should conduct a site-specific risk assessment to determine fencing requirements, and take the following actions while sites are unattended:

- Turn off electrical power
- Block access to elevated floors, scaffolding and ladders
- Securely store plant and equipment tools, chemicals and dangerous goods
- Empty water drums
- Cover excavation areas such as pits, trenches and pier holes
- Put up appropriate signage with site contact telephone numbers
- Organise adequate site security

"These simple steps to minimise the risk of access by unauthorised individuals will help site controllers prevent a potential tragedy," Mr Watson said.

Site controllers can access more information on construction site security and fencing from www.workcover.nsw.gov.au or by calling 13 10 50.

DISCLAIMER - The above is intended to provide general information in summary form. The contents do not constitute specific advice and should not be relied upon as such. Formal specific advice should be sought by members with respect to particular matters before taking action.

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