Defective Plank in Scaffold Results in Worker’s Fall and $85,000 Fine



A crew was dismantling a scaffold that had been erected inside the primary digester tank at a wastewater plant. A sawn lumber plank of the scaffold snapped and broke, causing a worker to fall about seven metres to the floor of the tank. He suffered permanent injuries and hasn’t returned to work. An MOL investigation found that the plank on which the worker was standing showed signs of rot and had cracks, some of which spanned almost the full length of the plank. Sec. 135(2) of the *Construction Projects Regulation* states that a work platform made of sawn lumber planks must have planks of Number 1 grade spruce that don’t have any defect affecting their load-carrying capacity. The scaffold company pleaded guilty to a safety offence and was fined $85,000 [*Action Scaffold Services*, Govt. News Release, Jan. 24, 2017].