

N.Y. Construction Accident Law Part 8: Scaffold Accidents

Scaffold accidents are among the most common construction site accidents and are so common they are covered by a law known as the "scaffold" or "gravity" law.

NEW YORK, NY, USA, November 5, 2013 /EINPresswire.com/ -- One of the most common construction site accidents, scaffold accidents, falls under New York Labor Law section 240(1), which imposes strict liability against general contractors and owners of buildings that are under construction or renovation. This law was first passed in the City of New York in 1885, and covered accidents involving the operation of the force of gravity. These accidents became so common at construction sites that the law became known as the "scaffold" law or the "gravity" law. The law covers scaffolds, ladders, hoists, slings, ropes and similar devices. The law imposes strict liability on general contractors and owners for injuries that result from the force of gravity, including injuries sustained both from falls from scaffolds and related devices, and injuries sustained from being struck by falling objects.

According to [New York City construction accident](#) attorney Jonathan C. Reiter, whose office is in the Empire State Building, and who has handled many scaffold accidents, this law has provided legal recourse to construction workers injured or killed as a result of scaffold accidents, as follows: " This law was first passed in the City of New York in recognition of the vast explosion in construction projects in the City and the high risk that construction workers have of workplace related accidents. There have been many attempts over the years to destroy the protections of the law by instigating a change in the law which would impose a defense based on the workers' own negligence in causing such accidents. Just recently, the latest attempt at destroying the strict liability portion of this law was met with the fierce opposition of Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver who was successful in defeating any such change in the law."

Scaffolds are constructed of various materials, such as metal and wood, and are held together by joints, hoists and ropes. At any point, in either the construction of the scaffolds, or the safety inspections that are required of such scaffolds, the structural integrity of the scaffold can fail, which can lead to devastating injuries and in many instances death.

As Mr. Reiter explained: "If a scaffold fails in any of its various parts, the result can be a fall from a substantial height, causing [serious life-threatening injuries](#) to the worker(s) involved. Such risk is recognized and addressed by the protections of Labor Law section 240(1). This is a crucial law that needs to be upheld, despite attacks by business and construction interests, whose motive is

for profit.”

The intent of the law is to not only protect the construction worker, but to give the owners and contractors a powerful incentive to construct scaffolds and other devices in a safe manner, and to conduct regular and proper safety inspections to reduce the risk of devastating injuries as much as possible. As Mr. Reiter stated: “The law is actually a win-win law, in that the owners and general contractors have a powerful incentive to have safe scaffolds at work sites, reducing the risk to their workers, which leads to a much more efficient and safe workplace, which in the end leads to greater profit.”

For more on construction accidents in New York City, please read Jonathan Reiter's Construction Accident Series found here: <http://www.jcreiterlaw.com/news>

Press release courtesy of Jonathan C. Reiter: http://www.jcreiterlaw.com/ny-construction-accident-law-part-8-scaffold-accidents_10900.html

Jonathan C. Reiter
The Law Firm of Jonathan C. Reiter
(212) 736-0979
[email us here](#)

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