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Department Heads, Senior Managers and Line Managers are to ensure that all personnel under their direct responsibility are suitably briefed on the contents of this SHEF Alert

HM Naval Base Clyde



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Fall from Height

The failure of a balcony has resulted in an employee falling approximately 5 metres and sustaining serious injuries to his hip and elbow. Two other employees were also injured during the incident.

Investigation by Structural engineers and the H&S Department indicates that there was a failure at the construction stage. The building is approximately 48 years old and the balcony is constructed of concrete with rebar (reinforcing bar) bonded within it. Inspection of the rebar has not uncovered any corrosion and none of the rebar rods have snapped, however, they have bent under the weight of the concrete without breaking. The original construction drawings were examined and they showed that the rebar should have been in the top of the concrete to keep the concrete under compression but they were in fact positioned at the bottom. This error has resulted in a failure some 48 years later.

The investigation is currently ongoing and the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) have visited the site to conduct an investigation and have confirmed that they concur with our initial conclusions which indicates a failure to adhere to the original construction stage drawings by the construction company.

In the short term the other suspect concrete platforms in this building will be safely removed and examined to determine if the failure is a one off or indicative of a systemic failure by this construction company. The HSE have requested details of the original construction company for their investigation.

This alert will be shared with other Babcock companies and contacts as well as the wider MoD community.



Picture showing bent rebar in wrong area of the concrete

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