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# Championing EN1004!

If you don't use towers that conform to EN1004, you risk your own life, or the life of someone else, each and every time you use one. EN 1004 is the European product standard for towers that sets out the minimum safety criteria.

Throughout 2016 PASMA will be championing the safety critical features of EN1004 towers which can be recognised by the distinctive EN1004 label. Non-compliant towers, often referred to as 'domestic' or 'H-frame towers' represent a serious risk to users. Typically they are made from painted or galvanised steel and, amongst other things, use loose scaffold boards or home made platforms which can break or move, have no built-in access to ensure safe ascent and descent, and do not come supplied with the correct

size and quantity of stabilisers to prevent overturning.

In contrast, EN1004 towers have purpose-designed platforms with safe trapdoor entry and exit, offer built-in access, come complete with the necessary stabilisers, and have the required number and type of guardrails to prevent a fall.

Free leaflets and posters are available from PASMA which emphasise the serious and significant differences between the two types of tower and reinforce the message that selecting and using the correct equipment is



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essential to safe working.

Mobile access towers can provide a safe solution in an extensive range of work at height situations. Their flexibility of configuration, strength with lightness and speed of assembly and dismantling, are just some of their significant advantages. Advance configurations include large deck structures where a series of towers are joined together in two or more directions

in a grid linked with bridging beams and platforms. These are often referred to as 'birdcage scaffold' or 'boxing ring'.

Other examples include bridging structures, façade tower structures, stepped structures and high level structures which are towers that exceed the standard free standing heights of 8 metres for external use and 12 metres for internal use.



## A salutary warning

Throughout 2015 PASMA has taken the opportunity to comment on successful Health & Safety Executive prosecutions, following earlier accidents involving towers that had resulted in either serious injury or in some cases a directly related fatality.

The need for the proper inspection and maintenance of mobile access towers was tragically highlighted with the death of James Baillie, 53, who fell six metres from a faulty tower in September 2011. As reported in the Health & Safety Executive's press release, the company involved was fined £40,000 for breaching the relevant health and safety regulations.

The court heard that the tower platform was in "a bad state of repair due to brown rot decay," when Baillie stepped on to it. It gave way causing him to fall to the ground. The HSE said: "The company failed to provide safe and suitable working equipment for their

customer and his workers. There was no excuse for allowing the use at work of mobile access tower components that were in such a poor condition. The scaffolding industry is well aware of the risks involved in this type of work. The tower should have been properly inspected and maintained, or otherwise taken out of service".

This fatality and others, underlines the absolute necessity for access towers, or any item of work at height equipment, to be subject to the completion of a pre-use inspection record. Tower components should also be inspected at suitable intervals and a record kept of those inspections.

You must also be trained and competent to build and dismantle a tower. Selecting, inspecting and maintaining the correct equipment is essential to safe working.

PASMA marketing and communications officer, Gary Chudleigh said: "Incidents like this are entirely preventable. That's why, throughout 2016, we will

continue to campaign for towers to be properly assembled and inspected by a trained, competent person following the PASMA Code of Practice and the manufacturer's instructions. Significantly, adhering to a strict inspection and audit regime is obligatory for PASMA members."

## Diary dates for 2016

**Safety & Health Expo:** PASMA will again be exhibiting at the Safety & Health Expo, 21-23 June, at ExCeL, London.

**AIF Conference:** 'Managing change and innovation in working at height' will be the principal theme of the Access Industry Forum's first conference on 13th October, at Holywell Park, Loughborough. The lead speaker will be Philip White, head of the HSE's Operational Strategy Division.



**PASMA Tower Week:** This will take place from the 14th to the 18th November. An information pack for members will be available later in the year.

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www.pasma.co.uk

For details of PASMA standards, guidance and training, including free PocketCards and posters, visit: [www.pasma.co.uk](http://www.pasma.co.uk)