Altered Scaffold Collapses Under Weight

Two workers fell from a suspended scaffold when it broke in half 10 stories above the ground.

The scaffold was loaded with supplies and equipment to repair balconies. It had been altered to lengthen the span by splicing two sections together.

After these alterations, workers complained it was sagging in the middle. It was reinforced without the approval of an engineer. These alterations decreased its load capacity.

Neither worker was wearing fall arrest equipment at the time of the fatality. They had just removed their safety belts because they were preparing to work from a balcony. When the scaffold collapsed, one worker managed to grab a balcony rail to save himself. The other fell to his death.

Never alter equipment which is designed to handle a certain load or capacity. Alterations which may seem insignificant can change the capacity of the equipment. When working at heights, wear fall arrest harnesses, and keep them attached to the lifeline while you are getting on and off suspended scaffolds.