Bad Board Disintegrates

One defective plank was the cause of a three-story fall that killed a bricklayer.

He was part of a crew laying bricks on the top floor of a building. They had built a six-foot (1.83-meter) platform across the space between two scaffolds.

They had done everything properly, with the correct size planks and the required guardrails. However, one of the planks was not scaffold grade and it had extensive dry rot in the center. The bricklayer stepped on the plank and it fell apart. He fell 30 feet (9.4 meters) to the surface below.

Investigators looking into this fatality recommended that a competent person frequently and regularly inspect the jobsite, including materials and equipment. They also issued a reminder that only scaffold grade or equivalent lumber should be used for planking on scaffolds. Individual scaffold planks should be inspected for defects prior to being put into use. What about your worksite? Could there be any hidden lethal defects in the equipment you use?