



Systemic Safety Alert **Prevention of being Struck by Falling Objects**

Major systemic safety problems

Struck by falling object leading to workers' death or serious injury occurs from time to time on construction sites. Even a relatively light and small object, such as a work material or hand tool, can cause serious head injury or even fatality when the falling object hits a worker. The following are the major systemic safety problems attributed to the occurrence of the relevant accidents:

- failure to conduct adequate risk assessment;
- failure to formulate or implement appropriate risk control measures;
- failure to ensure and maintain good site housekeeping;
- failure to provide adequate safety information, instruction, training and supervision to employees concerned; and
- slack in control and monitoring to ensure that risk control measures stay effective.

Accident prevention measures

Registered Safety Officers (RSOs) should advise their employers/ clients to:

- (i) appoint a competent person to conduct task-specific risk assessments to identify all potential hazards associated with the work, especially the hazards of falling objects, having regard to the nature of work, the work environment and the work activities in the vicinity;
- (ii) formulate proper precautionary measures to prevent falling objects with due regard to the results of risk assessments, including but not limited to:
 - ensure objects are properly stored;
 - place and stack objects properly away from the floor edges or openings;
 - safeguard any floor edges and openings by suitable guard-rails, barriers, toe-boards and fencings with netting or protective screens, or coverings;
 - closely board or plank working platforms, gangways and runs;
 - provide catch-fans with suitable receptacle and nettings along the structures under construction in accordance with the relevant codes of practice;



- suitably remove objects and materials accumulated on the fans and nettings from time to time;
 - cordon or fence off the areas with warning notices displayed where hazards of falling objects are foreseeable to strictly prohibit any workers/ employees from entering the areas, and only allow authorised persons to get into the areas after proper controls are in place and fully implemented to ensure that there is no risk of being struck by falling objects;
 - prohibit throwing, tipping or shooting down objects, materials and tools from a height where they are liable to cause injury to any person on or near sites;
 - provide and use debris chutes for removing debris;
 - avoid carrying out any work on the open ground of a workplace shortly after typhoon or inclement weather, and only resume work after assessing the effects of typhoon or inclement weather on site;
 - ensure and maintain good housekeeping on site by keeping all storage areas tidy and trying to keep minimum amount of materials on site; and
 - provide each workman employed on the site with a suitable safety helmet including a chin strap and ensure no workman remains on the site unless he is wearing a suitable safety helmet.
- (iii) formulate inspection programme with regular inspections schedules to identify any conditions that may lead to fall of objects and ensure that appropriate prevent measures are implemented;
- (iv) provide all workers/ employees involved with necessary safety information, instruction and training, and ensure that they are familiar with the safe work procedures and relevant safety measures; and
- (v) establish and implement an effective monitoring and control system to ensure all safety measures are strictly followed.

Registered Safety Auditors (RSAs) should take into account these systemic safety problems and accident prevention measures in executing safety audit functions.



DISCLAIMER

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