



Work Safety Alert Collapse of Catchfans of Scaffolding

1. **Date of Accident :** October 2016
2. **Place of Accident :** A demolition site
3. **Summary :**

The bamboo scaffolding, including catchfans, erected at the external walls of a building under demolition partially collapsed leading to falling of building materials and debris.

4. **Work Safety Alert for Contractors/ Employers :**

To prevent any workers/ employees engaged in demolition of buildings from being endangered by falling materials, the contractors/ employers should provide and maintain a safe system of work which should include, but not limited to, the following:

- appointing a competent person to conduct task-specific risk assessments in identifying all potential hazards associated with the demolition work, taking into account the building's conditions, the effectiveness of the temporary supports of the building and the impacts to the adjacent buildings during the demolition work;
- formulating appropriate safe work methods and procedures for the demolition work with due regard to the results of the risk assessments and in line with relevant codes of practice and guidelines, including the implementation of a safe demolition plan covering the demolition procedures, detailed sequence of operation and the restrictions on the use of any particular type of equipment which may affect the stability of the building;



- ensuring that sufficient and effective safety features such as hoardings, covered walkways, catch platforms, catchfans, etc. are erected prior to the demolition operation with due consideration to the safety and convenience of traffic, passers-by, users of adjacent buildings and all workmen engaged in the demolition work, which should be properly maintained in good conditions until the completion of the demolition work;
- ensuring that the specifications and construction details of hoardings, covered walkways, catch platforms, catchfans and all other necessary precautionary measures conform to the relevant codes of practice and guidelines; and suit the site conditions and the requirements of the selected demolition method;
- taking effective steps to ensure that the supports for the scaffolding are of adequate strength to hold the vertical and lateral loads imposed on the scaffolding including catchfans. The construction of the scaffolding shall withstand the loading situations at all stages of the demolition works without causing overstressing, instability, bulging, distortion, overturning, collapse, settlement or damage to any portion of the scaffolding;
- conducting regular inspection to the scaffolding and promptly removing any debris accumulated on the catchfans to avoid accumulation of debris that may cause undue stress to the scaffolding;
- prohibiting throwing, tipping or shooting down the debris waste and other materials from a height where they are liable to cause injury to any person or damage to property on or near the site;
- assigning a competent and experienced site supervisor to supervise the overall demolition work to ensure that all risks are effectively managed;
- providing all workers/ employees involved in the demolition work with adequate information, instruction and training to ensure that they are familiar with the safe work procedures and safety measures; and



- establishing and implementing an effective monitoring and control system to ensure strict and full compliance with all the above safety measures.

5. Reference :

- [Safe Systems of Work](#)¹
- [Five Steps to Risk Assessment](#)¹
- [Five Steps to Information, Instruction and Training](#)¹
- [Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety](#)¹
- [Code of Practice for Metal Scaffolding Safety](#)¹
- [Code of Practice for Demolition of Buildings](#)¹

DISCLAIMER

This Work Safety Alert (“the Alert”) is issued at the earliest possible opportunity after a serious accident with a view to drawing the attention of interested parties to the general safety precautionary measures necessary to protect people engaging in similar work activities. The material contained in the Alert constitutes general guidance only. It does not reduce, limit, or replace, any legal obligations upon any person to comply with any statutory duties under relevant legislation. Users such as Managers and Supervisors should make their own evaluation of the information contained in the Alert to determine if it can be applied to their own situations and practices. The Labour Department does NOT accept any responsibilities for any loss or damage resulting from the use of or failure to use of the information on the Alert.

Note: The material contained in the Alert is not exhaustive, and will be supplemented/ adjusted where necessary if more relevant information comes to light.

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