



Work Safety Alert

Fall from Ladder while Conducting Inspection of Air-conditioning Units

1. **Date of Accident :** November 2016
2. **Place of Accident :** An industrial premises under renovation
3. **Summary :**

A worker was suspected to have fallen from an aluminum folding ladder to the ground while inspecting an air-conditioning unit that was suspended from the ceiling. He passed away later on the same day.

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

To prevent any workers/ employees from falling from height, the contractors/ employers undertaking air-conditioning works should:

- appoint a competent person to conduct task-specific risk assessments in identifying all potential hazards that associated with every air-conditioning work process, particularly those involving work-above-ground, taking into account the nature of work and the working environment in the vicinity;
- formulate safe work methods and procedures for work-above-ground with due regard to the results of the risk assessments;
- provide suitable and adequate safe means of access to and egress from every place of work;
- provide and ensure the proper use of suitable working platforms or other safe means of support such as light-duty working platforms by workers who work above ground;



- ensure that every working platform is closely boarded or planked and provided with suitable toe-boards, and every board or plank is rest securely and evenly on its support;
- ensure that the height of a guard-rail above the surface of a working platform is not less than 900mm and not more than 1,150mm for a top guard-rail and not less than 450mm and not more than 600mm for an intermediate guard-rail; and that the height of a toe-board or other similar barrier erected on the platform is not less than 200mm;
- ensure that every working platform is inspected and certified safe by a competent person before first use and at regular intervals not exceeding 14 days;
- ensure that ladders should not be used for any work-above-ground at 2m or more;
- unless in very exceptional circumstances that working platforms or other safe means of support such as light-duty working platforms are impracticable to be used, prohibit the use of ladders for work-above-ground below 2m;
- under such exceptional circumstances where the use of ladders is unavoidable, exercise stringent control, such as through implementing a permit-to-work system, to ensure that adequate and suitable control and safety measures are put in place to safeguard the workers concerned;
- where the provision of working platform or other safe means of support for work-above-ground at 2m or more is not reasonably practicable, provide every worker/ employee engaged in such work with a suitable safety harness which should be continuously attached to a suitable and secure anchorage system throughout the work;
- if the use of fall arresting systems for work-above-ground is inevitable, take all necessary steps to ensure the proper use of such systems by the workers/ employees concerned;
- provide each worker/ employee employed at the workplace with a suitable safety helmet with a chin strap and take all reasonable steps to ensure the proper wearing of the same by the worker/ employee;



- provide all workers/ employees concerned with the necessary safety information, instruction and training, and ensure that they are familiar with the safe work procedures and safety measures; and
- establish and implement an effective monitoring and control system to ensure all safety measures are strictly followed.

5. Reference :

- [A Guide to the Provisions for Safe Places of Work under Part VA of the Construction Sites \(Safety\) Regulations¹](#)
- [Guidance Notes on Classification and Use of Safety Belts and their Anchorage Systems¹](#)
- [A Casebook of Fatal Accidents Related to Work-at-Height¹](#)
- [Guidelines on Work-above-ground Safety by the Construction Industry Council¹](#)

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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