



## **Work Safety Alert**

### **Falling from a Metal Working Platform into the Water**

- 1. Date of Accident :** July 2016
- 2. Place of Accident :** A construction site adjacent to sea
- 3. Summary :**

A worker, while working on a metal working platform erected for construction of a cofferdam near the harbour front, fell through an adjacent opening into the water, and was certified dead later in the hospital.

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

To ensure safe working over/near water and to prevent any persons from falling from height/into water, the contractor/employer responsible for any construction work over/near water should:

- appoint a competent person to conduct task-specific risk assessments in identifying all potential hazards associated with the construction work, taking into account the nature of work and the working environment;
- formulate safe work methods and procedures with due regard to the results of the risk assessments;
- erect effective guard-rails and toe-boards at all edges of the workplaces where persons are liable to fall from height or into water; and ensure that the guard-rails are of adequate strength and securely fixed;
- ensure that the height of a guard-rail above the surface of the edge is not less than 900 mm and not more than 1150 mm for a top guard-rail and not less than 450 mm and not more than 600 mm for an intermediate guard-rail; and that the height of a toe-board is not less than 200 mm;



- ensure that all openings are properly covered where persons are liable to fall from height, to land surfaces or into water;
- if erection of guard-rails at dangerous edges/openings is impracticable or temporary removal of the guard-rails/coverings is unavoidable, provide every worker who is engaged in the work near the edge/opening with a suitable safety harness with continuous and effective anchorage system; and ensure the proper use of the fall arresting equipment by the worker;
- ensure good housekeeping on the site to prevent fall, slip and trip accidents;
- ensure that every worker at the workplace who is at risk of falling into water, is wearing a lifejacket; and the lifejackets so provided should fit the wearers and should not affect their vision, hearing or breathing, nor contain any component which may cause injury to the wearers in normal use;
- formulate effective rescue procedures to deal with emergency situations;
- provide suitable rescue equipment against drowning and keep it readily accessible for emergency use; and take measures to arrange for the prompt rescue of any person in danger of drowning;
- make available sufficient first aid equipment including stretcher(s), sucker for clearing a person's airway, portable resuscitation equipment and first aid facilities for immediate use in case of emergency;
- provide all workers/employees and other relevant site personnel with necessary safety information, instruction and training and ensure that they are familiar with the safe work procedures and safety measures in preventing fall into water and emergency arrangements in handling emergencies; and



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

## 5. Reference :

- [A Guide to the Provisions for Safe Places of Work under Part VA of the Construction Sites \(Safety\) Regulations<sup>1</sup>](#)
- [Guidance Notes on Classification and Use of Safety Belts and their Anchorage Systems<sup>1</sup>](#)
- [Code of Practice for Safety and Health at Work \(Land-based Construction over water -- Prevention of Fall\)<sup>1</sup>](#)
- [Safety Guide for Construction Work over / near Water<sup>1</sup>](#)
- [A Casebook of Fatal Accidents related to Work-at-height<sup>1</sup>](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Click to view document

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### **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.