



Work Safety Alert

Struck by the Counterweight of a Lift

- 1. Date of Accident :** February 2016
- 2. Place of Accident :** A building construction site

3. Summary :

A worker, while working at a lift pit, was struck to death by the descending counterweight of a lift.

4. Work Safety Alert for Contractors/ Employers :

To ensure the safety of workers/ employees engaged in any work inside a lift shaft/ at a lift pit, contractors/ employers undertaking lift works 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 to identify all potential hazards associated with the work undertaken inside the lift shaft/ at the lift pit, taking into account the type of work to be carried out (including lift testing), the working conditions of the lift shaft and the personnel undertaking the task;
- formulating a lift work safety plan based on the results of the risk assessments. The plan should cover method statements for all work processes, appropriate safe working procedures and the safety measures to be adopted, all of which should meet the requirements of relevant codes of practices, industry guidelines, recognized safety standards and lift manufacturer's specifications/ instructions;
- ensuring that while work is in progress at the lift pit, no other work processes are allowed to be conducted above the lift pit unless a permit-to-work system has been established and implemented where



all associated work hazards including the hazard of being struck by any moving parts (including the counterweight of the lift) have been eliminated. Among others, the following safety precautions should be taken:

- an appropriate device to stop the lift car from operation should be installed near the lift pit, which should be activated to render the lift car inoperative before any workers are permitted to enter the lift pit;
 - the main switch to the lift should be turned off, tagged and locked out;
 - warning notices should be displayed at both the lift pit entrance and the lift machine room indicating that work is in progress at the lift pit;
 - adequate and appropriate communication means/ equipment, such as walkie-talkies, should be provided to all parties involved in the lift work to maintain effective communication; and
 - steps should be taken to ensure that nobody remains at the lift pit before the lift car is allowed to move.
- ensuring that the lift work is well-planned and coordinated to prevent incompatible activities being performed at the same time;
 - ensuring that the lift work is conducted safely under the direct supervision of a person who is competent by virtue of his substantial training and practical experience in relation to the relevant work;
 - ensuring that only competent workers/ employees possessing adequate knowledge, skills and experience are employed to carry out the lift work;
 - providing all workers/ employees, supervisors and related personnel involved in the lift work with necessary safety information, instruction and training;



- ensuring that workers/ employees, supervisors and related personnel involved in the lift work are familiar with the safe work procedures and safety measures, and fully understand their roles and responsibilities; and
- establishing and implementing an effective monitoring and control system to ensure strict and full compliance with all the above safety measures.

5. Reference :

- [Code of Practice for Safety at Work \(Lift and Escalator\)¹](#)
- [Safe Systems of Work¹](#)
- [Five Steps to Information, Instruction and Training¹](#)
- [Five Steps to Risk Assessment¹](#)
- [A Casebook of Fatal Accidents in Lift Installation, Maintenance and Repairing Work¹](#)

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.

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