



## Work Safety Alert Use of Chemicals Inside a Water Tank

1. **Date of Accident :** July 2023
2. **Place of Accident :** A water tank under construction
3. **Summary :**

A worker was injured when conducting waterproof painting work inside a water tank under construction. He was certified dead later in the hospital.

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

Workers conducting waterproof painting work inside a water tank may be exposed to various risks. Contractors/ proprietors/ employers/ employees undertaking waterproof painting work should follow [Chemical Safety in the Workplace - Guidance Notes on Paint Spraying and Related Coating Processes](#)<sup>1</sup> and relevant safety and health legislation and guidelines, to ensure the safety and health of workers. As for works in confined spaces, contractors/ proprietors/ employers should follow the [Code of Practice for Safety and Health at Work in Confined Spaces](#)<sup>1</sup>, [A Brief Guide to the Factories and Industrial Undertakings \(Confined Spaces\) Regulation](#)<sup>1</sup>, and relevant safety and health legislation and guidelines, to ensure the safety and health of workers while working inside the confined space.

To prevent any workers/ employees from being endangered while performing waterproof painting work in a confined facility, contractors/ proprietors/ employers should:

- appoint a competent person to conduct task-specific risk assessments of the working conditions, taking into account the nature of the work, the chemicals used, emergency situations and rescue operations, etc. before the commencement of the work and make relevant recommendations on measures to be taken in relation to safety and health of workers while working in that facility;
- if the assessments identify risks of serious injuries, loss of consciousness or asphyxiation, an effective safe system of work should be formulated and



implemented which include, but not limited to, the following:

- implementing a permit-to-work system, having all necessary safety precautions taken and certified in writing with the period during which workers may remain safely inside the facility specified, before any workers are allowed to enter the facility;
- providing forced ventilation to remove any hazardous substances and to maintain sufficient fresh air supply while workers are at work in the facility;
- ensuring that only those certified workers with suitable training and experience are allowed to enter the facility for work and providing them with adequate information and instruction;
- ensuring that workers entering the facility use suitable personal protective equipment as appropriate, such as respirators, approved breathing apparatuses, safety harnesses connected to lifelines that are strong enough to enable each of them to be pulled out, etc.;
- avoiding workers working alone and assigning a stand-by person to station outside the facility throughout the time of operation to maintain communication with the workers inside;
- ensuring effective communication among the workers working inside and outside the facility;
- formulating and implementing proper emergency procedures, including provision of sufficient and suitable rescue equipment as well as formulation of suitable evacuation and rescue procedures; and
- exercising effective monitoring and supervision to ensure that the above safety measures are fully implemented and strictly followed.

## 5. Reference :

- [Five Steps to Risk Assessment](#)<sup>1</sup>
- [Safe Systems of Work](#)<sup>1</sup>



- [Chemical Safety in the Workplace - Guidance Notes on Paint Spraying and Related Coating Processes](#)<sup>1</sup>
- [A Brief Guide to the Factories and Industrial Undertakings \(Confined Spaces\) Regulation](#)<sup>1</sup>
- [Code of Practice for Safety and Health at Work in Confined Spaces](#)<sup>1</sup>

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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.

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