



Work Safety Alert Collapse of a Temporary Working Platform Over the Sea

1. **Date of Accident :** March 2017
2. **Place of Accident :** A sea viaduct under construction
3. **Summary :**

While a team of workers were engaged in dismantling a temporary working platform suspended by two fibre-rope slings under a bridge segment, the platform together with three workers fell into the sea when the two fibre-rope slings suddenly broke, resulting in two fatalities and one injury. During the breakage of rope slings, one of the I-beams supporting the slings on the bridge deck was displaced, causing bodily injuries to two other workers working nearby.

4. Work Safety Alert for Contractors/ Employers :

To ensure the safety of workers/ employees engaged in erection/ alteration/ dismantling of temporary working platform over water, 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 work, taking into account the nature of work and the working environment;
- formulating appropriate safe work methods and procedures detailing the proper sequences of work for the erection/ alteration/ dismantling of temporary working platform with due regard to the results of risk assessments, which should also be in line with relevant codes of practice and guidelines;



- appointing a professional engineer with adequate qualifications, competence and experience to design the temporary working platform that is in conformity with established standards and capable of safely sustaining all loads to be applied to the complete unit, particularly the sufficiency/ strength of the suspension components, and ensuring that all components of the working platform should be of sound construction and free from patent defect;
- ensuring that the temporary working platform is erected/ altered/ dismantled in strict conformity with the design drawings, specification and method statement; and that the relevant safe work methods and procedures, and safety measures should also be followed stringently;
- ensuring that the temporary working platform is erected/ altered/ dismantled by trained workmen with adequate experience. They should also be under the immediate supervision of a competent person who should have sufficient technical knowledge and management skills, and be able to read and understand the design drawings, specification and method statement of the work;
- ensuring that the temporary working platform is not used unless it has been thoroughly examined by a competent examiner, and a certificate in the approved form in which the competent examiner has made a statement to the effect that it is in safe working order has been obtained;
- providing every worker/ employee who is engaged in erecting/ altering dismantling the temporary working platform with a suitable safety harness which should be continuously attached to an independent lifeline and taking steps to ensure the proper use of the safety harness by the workers/ employees concerned ;
- ensuring that no part of the temporary working platform including its railing is used to anchor the lanyards of the safety harnesses worn by the workers;



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

5. Reference :

- [Safe Systems of Work](#)¹
- [Five Steps to Risk Assessment](#)¹
- [Five Steps to Information, Instruction and Training](#)¹
- [Guidance Notes on Inspection, Thorough Examination and Testing of Lifting Appliances and Lifting Gear](#)¹.
- [Guidance Notes on Classification and Use of Safety Belts and their Anchorage Systems](#)¹
- [Safety Guide for Construction Work Over/ Near Water](#)¹
- [A Casebook of Fatal Accidents related to Work-at-height](#)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.

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