



Work Safety Alert Fall from a Bamboo Scaffold

1. **Date of Accident :** April 2018
2. **Place of Accident :** An industrial building under renovation
3. **Summary :**

A worker undertaking debris clearing work on a double-row bamboo scaffold at the external wall of an industrial building under renovation fell from 9/F level of the scaffold to the building proper and eventually fell into a refuse chute opening at 3/F below through consecutive floor openings. He sustained serious bodily injuries and passed away on the same day.

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

To prevent any workers/ employees from falling from height while undertaking any works at external walls, the contractors/ employers should:

- appoint a competent person to conduct task-specific risk assessments to identify all potential hazards associated with the work, taking into account the nature of work and the work environment, particularly where work-above-ground is involved;
- formulate safe work methods and procedures for the work, taking into consideration the results of the risk assessments and following the requirements of safety legislations, relevant codes of practice and guidelines;
- provide and ensure the proper use of a suitable scaffold such as double-row bamboo scaffold with suitable working platforms for work that cannot be safely done on or from the ground or from part of a permanent structure;



- ensure that every working platform of a bamboo scaffold is provided with suitable guard-rails and toe-boards, and that the height of a guard-rail above the surface of the working platform is not less than 900mm and not more than 1150mm for a top guard-rail and not less than 450mm and not more than 600mm for an intermediate guard-rail; otherwise, the platform is protected by not less than two horizontal bamboo members of the scaffold spaced at intervals between 750mm to 900mm; 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 closely boarded or planked; and every board or plank rests securely and evenly on its supports;
- ensure that every scaffold is inspected and certified safe by a competent person before being taken into use for the first time and at regular intervals not exceeding 14 days;
- ensure that all nearby dangerous edges, openings or void spaces, including floor openings and refuse chute openings, through which any person is liable to fall a distance of 2 metres or more, are properly fenced off or covered;
- where provision of suitable scaffolds and working platforms or protection of dangerous edges, openings or void spaces are not reasonably practicable, set up a fall arresting system by providing every worker/employee concerned with a suitable safety harness and ensure that the harness the worker wears is continuously attached to a suitable anchorage system from a safe place and throughout the work, and take necessary steps to ensure that every worker concerned is properly using the fall arresting system;
- provide each worker/ employer involved in the work with a suitable safety helmet equipped with a chin strap and ensure the proper wearing of the same by the worker/ employee throughout the work;



- 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 :

- [Safe Systems of Work](#)¹
- [A Guide to the Provisions for Safe Places of Work under Part VA of the Construction Sites \(Safety\) Regulations](#)¹
- [Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety](#)¹
- [Guidance Notes on Classification and Use of Safety Belts and their Anchorage Systems](#)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.

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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