



Work Safety Alert

Fall from a ladder while an air-conditioning plant under repair exploded

1. **Date of Accident :** March 2019
2. **Place of Accident :** A logistic centre
3. **Summary :**

While a worker was riding on a ladder to repair an air-conditioning plant, a component of the plant suddenly exploded, causing the worker to fall to the ground. The worker sustained serious head injury and passed away on the following day.

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

To prevent any workers/ employees from being endangered by explosion of an air-conditioning system under repair and the falling hazard while undertaking the air-conditioning work above ground, the proprietors/ contractors/ employers should:

- appoint a competent person to conduct task-specific risk assessments to identify all potential hazards associated with the air-conditioning work, taking into account the nature of work, the composition of the air-conditioning system, the type of refrigerant used and the working environment, particularly where work-above-ground is involved;
- formulate safe work methods and procedures for the work with due regard to the results of the risk assessments, manufacturer's specifications/ instructions, with the consideration of the requirements of safety legislation and relevant safety guidelines;



- provide and ensure the proper use of suitable working platforms for the work and refrain from using ladders as far as reasonably practicable;
- for light-duty work to be carried out in work environment where a suitable working platform or other safe means of support cannot be erected (for example, restrictive work space), provide and ensure the proper use of suitable step platforms or hop-up platforms as appropriate;
- ensure work related to the handling and replacement of refrigerants must be carried out by trained and competent workmen;
- ensure the replacement of refrigerant to the air-conditioning system shall be carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's instruction and avoid over-charging;
- keep refrigerants, especially flammable ones, away from ignition sources to prevent fire or explosion;
- ensure the refrigerant must first be completely removed from the system, followed by nitrogen purging before carrying out welding work to the system;
- provide each worker/ employee involved in the work with a suitable safety helmet equipped with a chin strap and ensuring 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
- [Five Steps to Risk Assessment](#)¹
- [Guidance Notes on Work Safety and Health of Air-conditioning Works](#)¹
- [Overview of Work-at-Height Safety](#)¹
- [Guidance Notes on the Selection, Use and Maintenance of Safety Helmets](#)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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