



Work Safety Alert Struck by a Falling Wooden Batten and Fell from Height

1. **Date of Accident :** March 2019
2. **Place of Accident :** A residential building construction site
3. **Summary :**

A worker was suspected to have been struck by a falling wooden batten and then fell from a working platform on a bamboo scaffold while he was conducting plastering work at the external wall of a residential building construction site. He sustained serious head injury and passed away on the same day.

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

To prevent any workers/ employees from being struck by any falling objects and falling from height while undertaking any works on a scaffold at the 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 the hazards of falling objects and persons falling from height;
- formulate safe work methods and procedures for the work with due regards to the results of risk assessments, and following the requirements of safety legislation, relevant codes of practice and guidelines;
- ensure that no loose materials are placed or stacked on or near the scaffold at the external wall which they are liable to fall;
- display warning notices at prominent locations to alert workers to the hazards of falling objects;
- provide each worker 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 throughout the work;

- provide and ensure the proper use of a suitable scaffold such as double-row bamboo scaffold with suitable working platforms;
- 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;
- provide all workers/ employees involved with necessary safety information, instruction and training, and ensure that they are familiar with the safe work procedures and relevant 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 Work¹](#)
- [Five Steps to Risk Assessment¹](#)
- [A Guide to the Provisions for Safe Places of Work under Part VA of the Construction Sites \(Safety\) Regulations¹](#)
- [Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety¹](#)
- [A Casebook of Fatal Accidents related to Work-at-height¹](#)

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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