

## Accident Advisory: Worker struck by fallen brick wall

Ref: [1920068](#) WSH Alert Accident Notification dated 25 November 2019

On 22 November 2019 around 10:30am, a worker was carrying out housekeeping works within a worksite next to an existing building, when a portion of the building's brick wall facade collapsed and struck the worker. The worker was conveyed to the hospital where he succumbed to his injuries two days later.

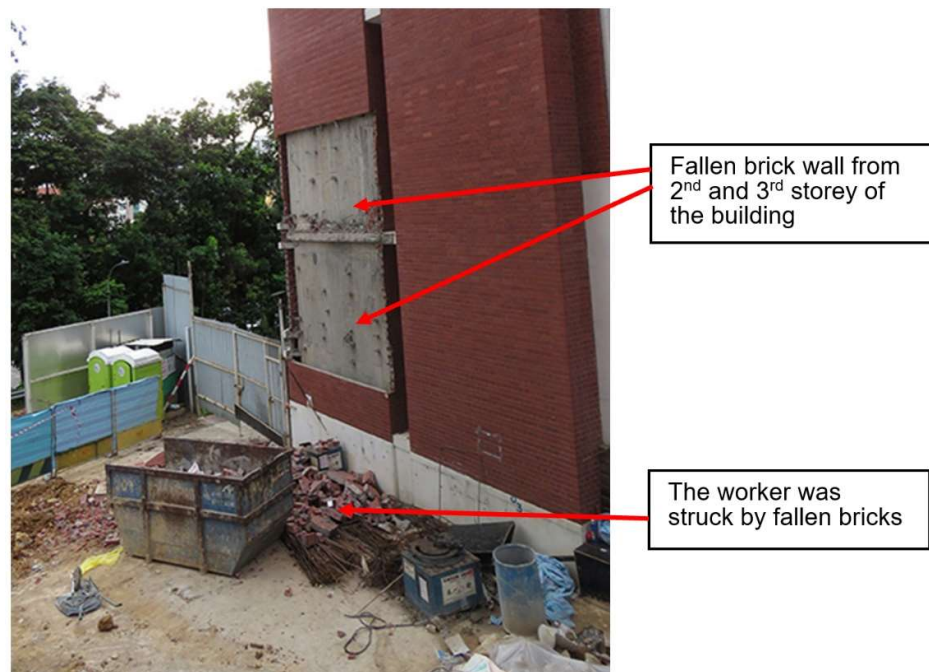


Figure 1: Overview of the accident scene.

## Recommendations

Developers, contractors, principals and employers carrying out building works are advised to assess workers' risks arising from factors beyond the worksite, such as construction activities at an adjacent worksite:

### Developers

- Together with the project designer, the developer (commonly referred to as the client) should ensure that all foreseeable risks are identified and control measures put in place to eliminate or reduce the risks. Residual risks (if any) should be communicated to the affected parties (including contractors in adjacent properties) so that additional measures may be taken prior to work commencement.
- The developer is encouraged to perform regular site walkabout at suitable intervals to monitor the works and ensure that contractors are adhering to the documented safe work procedures or method statements as well as the site safety rules.

## **Contractors**

Contractors must undertake safety planning prior to project execution. In particular, contractors must look out for incompatible work that must not be carried out concurrently. Where incompatible works are carried out concurrently, the chances of a worksite accident is increased. The two construction scenarios to plan for are:

Works next to adjacent worksites

- The contractor should ensure that the scope of the safety plan includes safety issues both inside and directly outside of the worksite boundary, especially at locations where existing work could affect adjacent property or workers at adjacent worksites.
- In the event of abutting worksites (where there is a common boundary between worksites), contractors of both sites should jointly survey the site boundary to ensure that all safety issues are identified and suitably addressed. Common issues include equipment and materials that need to be secured or relocated, and areas that may require protection from falling items.

Works involving Addition and Alteration (A&A)

- The stability of all structures (load bearing or otherwise) should also be ascertained before allowing adjacent works. For unstable structures, the affected area should be cordoned off while stability measures are being deployed and/or when A&A works are being carried out. Existing load bearing structures should be identified and clearly marked to prevent accidental damage to these structures.
- The possibility of falling bricks must be considered at each stage of the work. In this case, the works involved facade repair, as well as removal and replacement works. Prior to work commencement, a detailed inspection of the brick wall needs to be carried out to ascertain its condition and the hazard it presents. The danger zone must then be clearly demarcated and suitably barricaded to prevent access. All parties (including contractors not involved in the facade works) stationed in the vicinity must always be informed to stay clear of the danger zone(s).

## **Safety of the general public**

- Strict access control must be implemented to ensure that only authorised workers are allowed in the construction site and out of bounds to the general public.
- When preparing the worksite risk assessment, the safety of the general public must be included for sites next to public areas, which could be affected by the construction work.
- In cases where partial street and/or walkway closures are needed, temporary traffic control plan should be put in place to ensure vehicular and pedestrian safety.

## **Risk Assessment**

Conduct a thorough Risk Assessment (RA) for all work activities to manage any foreseeable risk that may arise when working at or next to an adjacent construction worksite. The RA should cover, but not limited to, the following areas:

### **Last Minute Risk Assessment (LMRA)**

- Contractors should conduct LMRA to identify new site-specific risks at the start of each day before any work is undertaken as well as how the new hazards could affect the work for the day and the appropriate means for hazard mitigation. It is suggested that the LMRA be recorded and signed off by all workers involved in the work activity. The signing-off would demonstrate that the LMRA has been

communicated and the relevant persons are aware of the new risks and its controls.

**Danger zone demarcation**

- All danger zones must be clearly demarcated and suitably barricaded to prevent access by the general public and workers from adjacent worksites.

**Safe Work Procedure (SWP)**

- A documented SWP must be prepared for each work activity such as the removal or installation of facade.

**Work coordination**

- Contractors are advised to actively share information and work together to coordinate their activities so that incompatible work can be avoided, and the work may proceed safely without causing harm to workers and/or persons in the vicinity.

**Further Information**

1. Workplace Safety and Health Act
2. Workplace Safety and Health (Risk Management) Regulations
3. Workplace Safety and Health (Construction) Regulations 2007
4. Workplace Safety and Health (Design for Safety) Regulations 2015
5. Workplace Safety and Health (General Provisions) Regulations
6. Code of Practice on Workplace Safety and Health Risk Management
7. CP 79: 1999 Code of Practice for Safety Management System for Construction Worksites (Incorporating Amendment No. 1, June 2010)
8. WSH Guidelines on Design for Safety
9. WSH Guidelines on Contractor Management
10. WSH Guidelines on Workplace Traffic Safety Management
11. WSH Council's Toolbox Meeting Kit

\* Information on the accident is based on preliminary investigations by the Ministry of Manpower as at 2 January 2020. This may be subject to change as investigations are still on-going. Please also note that the recommendations provided here are not exhaustive and they are meant to enhance workplace safety and health so that a recurrence may be prevented. The information and recommendations provided are not to be construed as implying liability on any party nor should it be taken to encapsulate all the responsibilities and obligations under the law.

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