

16 March 2021, Ref: 2021099

## Accident Advisory: Worker fell from height in a warehouse

Ref: [2021081](#) WSH Alert Accident Notification dated 4 December 2020

On 1 December 2020, two workers were packing goods in a warehouse when one worker heard a loud thud and found the other lying on the ground facing up. The injured worker was conveyed to the hospital where he subsequently succumbed to his injuries.



Location where injured worker was found lying on the ground

Figure 1: Overview of the accident scene.

## Recommendations

Persons in control of similar workplaces and work activities such as employers, principals and occupiers are advised to consider the following risk control measures to prevent similar accidents:

### **Safe work environment**

- Provide a safe path of access from the entrance of the warehouse to the storage racks. The passageways in a warehouse should be kept free of clutter.
- Provide adequate workplace lighting to facilitate safe work within the warehouse.

### **Safe retrieval of goods**

- Ensure that goods are organised for safe access, storage and retrieval. For manual retrieval by hand, it is important that heavy or bulky goods are stored on the lower shelves. Store only lighter and smaller items on the higher shelves.
- Provide and ensure safe and proper means of access to and egress from the storage racks. Goods placed at height may be accessed using a step platform (Figure 2) or other access equipment (e.g. vertical personnel platform).



Figure 2: Example of a step platform.

- Instruct workers not to gain access to goods stored on higher shelves by climbing on pallets of stored goods or stepping on lower shelving as these do not provide a firm footing and significantly raise the risk of a fall.
- To retrieve heavy goods not possible for manual retrieval by hand, use material handling equipment such as a pallet jack, reach truck or a forklift.
- Practise good housekeeping to eliminate tripping hazards and protect workers from being struck by falling goods.

#### **Safe work procedure**

- Develop Safe Work Procedure for storage and retrieval of goods, including the access equipment and/or material handling equipment to be used.
- Display the Safe Working Load (SWL) for each shelf of the storage rack. To prevent overloading, goods should be weighed before storage so that the SWL of the shelf is not exceeded.

#### **Work supervision**

- Provide on-site supervision to ensure workers adhere to safe work procedures; and
- Advise workers to adopt correct work position when retrieving goods and to avoid overstretching which can result in a fall.

### **Risk Assessment**

Conduct a thorough Risk Assessment (RA) for all work activities to manage any foreseeable risk that may arise for work in a warehouse. The RA should include, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Safe work procedure for goods storage and retrieval;
- Inspection of access or material handling equipment prior to use;
- Storage rack inspection programme;
- Workplace housekeeping; and
- Worker fitness for the assigned task.

### **Further Information**

1. Workplace Safety and Health Act
2. Workplace Safety and Health (Risk Management) Regulations
3. Workplace Safety and Health (General Provisions) Regulations
4. Workplace Safety and Health (Work at Heights) Regulations 2013
5. Code of Practice on Workplace Safety and Health Risk Management
6. Code of Practice on Working Safely at Heights

7. SS 531-1: 2006 (2013) Code of Practice for Lighting of Work Places – Indoor
8. MOM Circular: Safe Use of Storage Racks issued 7 May 2015
9. WSH Guidelines on Workplace Housekeeping
10. WSH Guidelines on Safeguarding Against Falling Objects
11. WSH Council’s Activity Based Checklist for Safe Storage in Warehouse
12. UK HSE’s A Guide to Health and Safety – Warehousing and Storage

Information on the accident is based on preliminary investigations by the Ministry of Manpower as at 14 Dec 2020. This may be subject to change as investigations are still on-going. Please 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 any liability on any party nor should it be taken to encapsulate all the responsibilities and obligations under the law.

---

We regret that we are unable to reply to emails at this email address. For enquiries or feedback, please email us at [contact@wshc.sg](mailto:contact@wshc.sg).

Visit the WSH Council's [website](#) now for updates on WSH-related matters, information and events.



---

This WSH Bulletin is available free of charge, may be printed or downloaded onto electronic, optical or similar storage media provided that such activities are for private research, study, or in-house use only. If such material is to be copied or reproduced, users are asked to ensure that the material is reproduced accurately and not in a misleading context, that the status of the material is identified and to acknowledge Workplace Safety & Health Council, Singapore as the source of the material.