

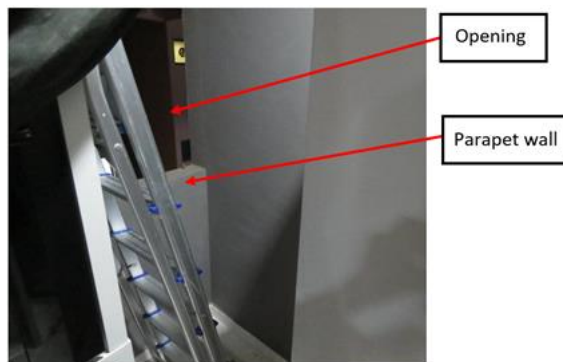


19 April 2021, Ref: 2122004

Accident Advisory: Worker fell through wall opening

Ref: [2122001](#) WSH Alert Accident Notification dated 12 April 2021

On 5 April 2021, a group of workers was tasked to move and dispose of furniture and electrical appliances from a unit on the 10th floor of a residential building. One of the workers was working from a ladder when he fell backwards over a wall opening. The wall opening was above a 1m-high parapet wall and covered by a window blind located at the service yard. The worker landed on the 3rd floor below. He was pronounced dead by attending paramedics.



Overview of the accident scene.

Recommendations

Every employer and principal must ensure that his/her undertaking can be carried out in a safe and healthy manner. This includes conducting a comprehensive risk assessment on the work process and environment. Persons in control of similar workplaces (including work carried out in a home environment) and work activities are advised to consider and implement the following risk control measures to prevent similar accidents:

Safe use of ladders

- Set up the ladder on firm, level and stable ground.
- Ensure the ladder is fully extended and its spreaders are locked.
- Always face the ladder and maintain three points of contact while using the ladder.
- Do not set up a ladder near unsecured openings that a worker could fall through.

Safe working at heights

- Conduct a proper site assessment to ensure all wall or floor openings with fall from height risks are accounted for before starting work.
- Advise workers never to assume that it is safe just because there is a physical object in front of an opening or that the opening behind the object is secured.
- If window blinds are present, always check what is behind the blinds and do not assume that an opening is fitted with windows and/or secured with a grill.
- If a worker has to work at or near an opening or parapet wall, the establishment of a Fall Prevention Plan (FPP) is important. The FPP should include:

- a summary of site hazards and their corresponding risk control measures;
 - Safe Work Procedure (SWP) and/or method statement;
 - issuance and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); and
 - Permit-To-Work (PTW) system for hazardous work at heights.
- Consider the use of a step platform or step ladder as these offer a more stable work surface for safer access and work.

Risk communication and work supervision

- Brief all workers (including subcontractors) on the possible hazards they could encounter in the designated work area as well as the risk controls in place.
- Remind workers to alert their supervisor and/or co-workers once they encounter an unsafe condition.
- Provide adequate supervision to ensure SWPs are strictly followed.
- Encourage workers to report to their supervisor if they are feeling unwell.

Risk Assessment

Conduct a thorough Risk Assessment (RA) before performing mover services and related work activities. The RA should cover, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Presence of unsecured openings through which a worker could fall.
- Possibility of falling off a ladder.
- Worker's health condition.
- Emergency preparedness and response plan.

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 (Construction) Regulations
5. Workplace Safety and Health (Work at Heights) Regulations
6. Code of Practice on Workplace Safety and Health Risk Management
7. Code of Practice for Working Safely at Heights
8. Singapore Standard SS EN 131: 2019 Ladders
 - Part 1: Terms, types, functional sizes
 - Part 2: Requirements, testing, marking
 - Part 3: Marking and user instructions
 - Part 4: Single or multiple hinge-joint ladders
 - Part 6: Telescopic ladders
 - Part 7: Mobile ladders with platform
9. WSH Guidelines on Personal Protective Equipment for Work at Heights
10. WSH Guidelines on Anchorage, Lifelines and Temporary Edge Protection Systems
11. WSH Guidelines on Contractor Management
12. WSH Council's Work at Heights Toolkit for Supervisors
13. WSH Council's Supervisor's Guidebook for Work at Height
14. WSH Council's Ladder Safety Guide
15. WSH Council's Guide to Effective Toolbox Meeting
16. WSH Council's Activity Based Checklist on Working Safely at Heights
17. WSH Council's Activity Based Checklist on Safe Use of Ladders
18. WSH Council's Activity Based Checklist for Effective Toolbox Meetings
19. WSH Council's Case Studies Booklet on Accidents Involving Work at Heights

Information on the accident is based on preliminary investigations by the Ministry of Manpower as at 16 Apr 2021. 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.

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