



19 May 2021, Ref 2122008

Accident Advisory: Company director fell through floor opening

Ref: [2021092](#) WSH Alert Accident Notification dated 17 February 2021

On 10 February 2021, a company director was at a private dwelling overseeing construction work when he fell through a floor opening and landed on a staircase about 4.7m below. The injured director was pronounced dead at the scene by attending paramedics.



Overview of the accident scene.

Recommendations

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

Safe work environment

- Prior to work commencement, conduct a site walkabout to identify hazards (especially new ones that may have arisen due to previous work activity) and check that suitable risk controls are in place.
- Confirm that workers are provided with a safe route of access to and egress from their designated work area(s).
- Securely cover all floor openings where possible, and/or install suitable temporary edge protection (e.g. guard railings).
- Carry out regular inspection and housekeeping to ensure no slip or trip hazards exist

especially in the vicinity of a floor opening.

- Implement site security measures and allow only authorised persons at the worksite.

Hazard communication

- Only persons (including management staff, workers, contractors and visitors) who have been briefed on the on-site hazards and risk controls may be authorised to enter the worksite.
- Install warning signs at suitable location(s) to alert workers to on-site dangers (e.g. presence of a fall hazard due to a floor opening).
- For enhanced safety, consider assigning an experienced worker to escort visitors (including the property owner) or contractors/new workers as they walk around the site.

Fall prevention plan (FPP)

- For work activities in the vicinity of an exposed floor opening, review the FPP and the respective Safe Work Procedures (SWPs) to ensure the use of fall prevention (e.g. travel restraint system) or fall protection (e.g. fall arrest system) equipment.
- It is mandatory for a Permit-To-Work (PTW) system to be implemented for all hazardous work-at-height activities where a person could fall a distance of more than three (3) metres.

Work at Height (WAH) training

- Ensure workers deployed to work at height have received adequate WAH training and are familiar with the use of fall prevention/protection systems. This includes the need to anchor one's full-body harness to a secure anchorage point or lifeline at all times when working at height.

Work supervision

- Provide on-site supervision to ensure that workers adhere to the safe work procedures.
- Consider implementing a buddy system so that co-workers can look out for each other while at work.

Risk Assessment

Conduct a thorough Risk Assessment (RA) for all work activities to eliminate or minimise any foreseeable risk that may arise when working near floor openings. The RA should cover, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Identification of WAH scenarios (e.g. working in the vicinity of a floor opening);
- Risk elimination/minimisation strategy (e.g. by covering the floor opening and securing the cover to the ground);
- Effectiveness of hazard communication;
- PTW system; and
- Worker health and fitness to work – in particular, persons feeling unwell should abstain from working at height.

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 2013
6. Code of Practice on Workplace Safety and Health Risk Management
7. Code of Practice for Working Safely at Heights
8. SS 570: 2011 Personal protective equipment for protection against falls from height
 - Single point anchor devices and flexible horizontal lifeline systems

9. SS 528: 2006 Specification for personal fall-arrest systems
 - Part 1: Full-body harnesses
 - Part 2: Lanyards and energy absorbers
 - Part 3: Self-retracting lifelines
 - Part 4: Vertical rails and vertical lifelines incorporating a sliding-type fall arrester
 - Part 5: Connectors with self-closing and self-locking gates
 - Part 6: System performance tests
10. WSH Guidelines on Anchorage, Lifelines and Temporary Edge Protection Systems
11. WSH Guidelines on Personal Protective Equipment for Work At Heights
12. WSH Council's Work at Heights Toolkit for Supervisors
13. WSH Council's Case Studies on Accidents Involving Work at Heights
14. WSH Council's Basic WSH Rules for Work at Heights
15. WSH Council's Activity Based Checklist for Working Safely on Heights
16. WSH Guidelines on Workplace Housekeeping

Information on the accident is based on preliminary investigations by the Ministry of Manpower as at 12 March 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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