

WSH Alert Accident Advisory, 9 December 2020: Worker fell from ladder

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9 December 2020, Ref: 2021083

Accident Advisory: Worker fell from ladder

Ref: 2021068 WSH Alert Accident Notification dated 30 October 2020

On 30 October 2020, a worker was at a private dwelling working under a roofing structure when he fell from an A-frame ladder. He was found lying on the floor in a semi-conscious state next to the ladder. The worker was conveyed to the hospital where he succumbed to his injuries on 4 November 2020.

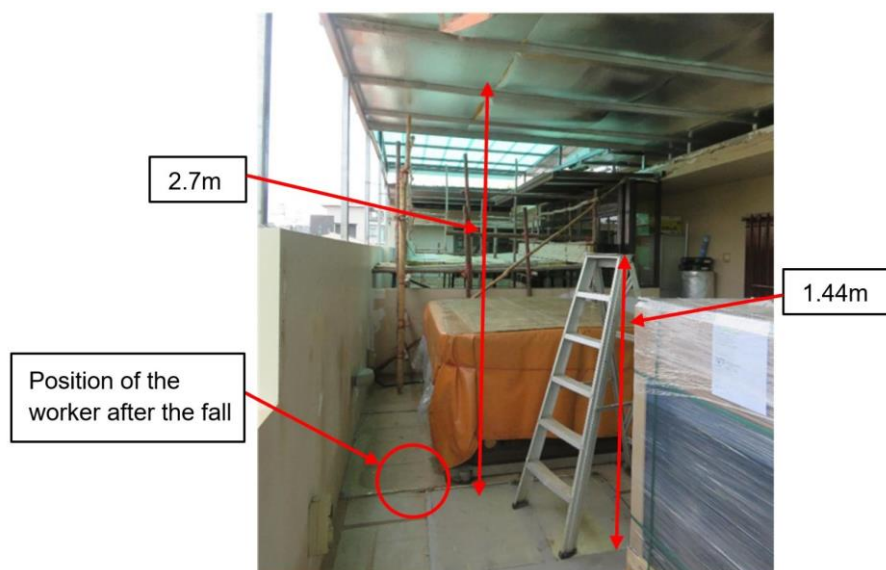


Figure 1: The accident scene.

Recommendations

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

Select a good ladder

- Provide only ladders that are of good construction and structural integrity. The use of ladders built according to SS EN 131: 2019 Ladders (or any other internationally recognised standard) is strongly recommended.
- Ensure workers select ladders that are in good condition and fit for purpose. Ladders that are damaged or contain loose or missing parts should never be used. Advise workers to inform their supervisors once they spot a ladder with defects.

Worker training

- Ensure all workers that are deployed to work at height (WAH) have received adequate WSH training and are familiar with the hazards of working on ladders and the precautionary measures to be taken.

Ladder safety tips

- Select the most suitable ladder for the work activity by making sure that the ladder is of sufficient height for the worker to access the designated work area without having to stand on its top rung;
- Inspect the ladder for visible defects before each use. The ladder should also be free from any oil, grease and/or other slipping hazards;
- Set up the ladder only on firm, level and stable ground;
- Check that the spreaders are locked in place prior to using the ladder;
- Use proper footwear;
- Always maintain three points of contact when using a ladder. This means one should keep either two feet and one hand or one foot and two hands on the ladder when ascending or descending the ladder;
- Climbing slowly and deliberately will ensure one does not make sudden movements that could lead to a fall;
- Maintain a centre of gravity by keeping the centre of one's belt buckle/stomach between the ladder's side rails when climbing and working. Do not overreach; and
- Devote full attention to the climb and descent until one is safely off the ladder.

Work supervision

- Provide adequate on-site supervision by a competent person for WAH activities to ensure that workers adhere to safe work procedures.

Worker health

- Conduct a pre-work health survey at the start of each work shift to verify each worker's fitness to work for the task at hand. Workers who are feeling unwell should not be placed on the task or work shift.

Risk Assessment

Conduct a thorough Risk Assessment (RA) for all work activities to manage any foreseeable risk that may result from working on a ladder. In particular, the RA should cover:

- the possibility of workers falling from ladders; and
- the need for active on-site task supervision.

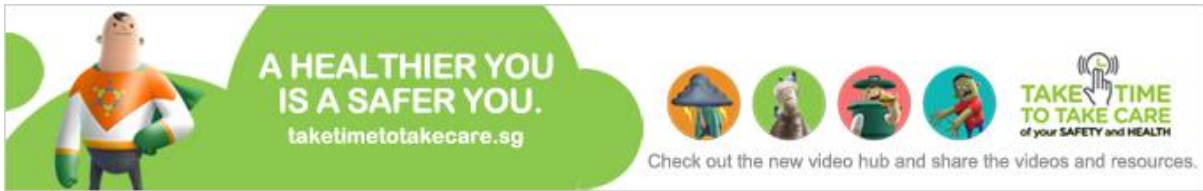
Further Information

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
5. Code of Practice on Workplace Safety and Health Risk Management
6. Code of Practice on Working Safely at Heights
7. Singapore Standards SS EN 131: 2019 Ladders
 - Part 1: Terms, types, functional sizes.
 - Part 2: Requirements, testing, marking.
 - Part 3: User instructions.
 - Part 4: Single or multiple hinge-joint ladders.
 - Part 6: Telescopic ladders.
 - Part 7: Mobile ladders with platform.
8. WSH Council's Ladder Safety Pack
9. WSH Council's Activity Based Checklist on Safe Use of Ladders

* Information on the accident is based on preliminary investigations by the Ministry of Manpower as at 03 Dec 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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