

WSH Bulletin, 15 December 2020: Five Fatalities in 10 days – Industries Called Upon for Safety Time-Out

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Five Fatalities in 10 days – Industries Called Upon for Safety Time-Out

In a short span of time from 23 November to 2 December 2020, five workplace fatalities had occurred across various industries. Preliminary investigations from the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) have found that these accidents could have been easily prevented through thorough inspection of worksites to correct any potentially unsafe conditions, as well as the re-training of workers and giving them time to adjust after a period of inactivity.

The Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council and its Tripartite Partners, namely the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) and MOM, have called upon the industries to conduct a [Safety Time-Out \(STO\)](#) to take stock and review activities and safety protocols and ensure safe operations. The associations listed below have pledged their support in advising their member companies to complete their STO exercises as soon as possible, or at least before 23 December 2020 when the festive season kicks in.

Associations advising members to conduct STO (List collated to-date and is non-exhaustive):

- Association of Process Industry
- Association of Singapore Marine Industries
- Container Depot Association Singapore
- Real Estate Developers' Association of Singapore
- SAAA@Singapore
- Singapore Chemical Industry Council
- Singapore Contractors Association Ltd
- Singapore Crane Association
- Singapore Logistics Association
- Singapore Manufacturing Federation
- Waste Management & Recycling Association of Singapore

SNEF Vice-President Mr Douglas Foo said that companies which are rushing to make up for lost time due to COVID-19 could compromise their workers' safety and health in the process. This might end up causing harm to their workers and result in greater disruptions to their business. He appealed to all employers to conduct the STO as soon as possible to protect their workers.

While companies should leverage the STO to review their WSH processes and consider conducting re-orientation programmes for workers who have not returned to the workplace for a prolonged period of time, so as to ease them back to their workplaces, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Mr Melvin Yong also urged workers to play an active part in ensuring their safety and the safety of their co-workers around them by co-operating with their employers in the STO exercise. As workplaces gradually reopen, it is important that workers continue to stay vigilant and to keep safety at the top of their minds. He further called for companies, especially unionised companies to also reach out to NTUC and our affiliated unions should they require help in implementing the Safety Time-Out exercise.

The WSH Council's Chairman Mr John Ng said: "I urge both companies and workers to seriously take heed of this call-to-action and collaborate to avoid injuries and fatalities at the workplace. While conducting the STO, companies must also pay attention to their workers' health, especially mental health, which may be challenged given the current stressful climate."

Safer resumption of activities in Singapore is possible. Together, we can prevent all injuries and ill-health at the workplace.

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