

11
March
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WSH ALERT

SERIOUS ACCIDENT/ INCIDENT

Worker injured after falling from work platform

A worker was standing on the second level of a work platform draining rainwater from a tarpaulin sheet, when he lost his balance and fell 3.35 metres to the ground. He was conveyed to the hospital for treatment and has since recovered.

The platform was unguarded (i.e. without railings) at the time of the accident, and the worker did not wear travel restraints.



The platform from which the worker fell

Overview of accident scene.

Recommendations

Fall from height accidents can occur when working at locations with open sides. To prevent similar accidents, consider the following measures:

- **Open side elimination:** Install guard rails at every work location where there is a fall risk.
- **Fall prevention and protection:** If guard rails cannot be installed at the platform, equip workers with a suitable travel restraint system so that they cannot get close to the open side(s). In cases where a worker could fall more than 5m, he should wear a fall arrest system.
- **Strict access control:** Prevent unauthorised access by cordoning off hazardous work areas using effective barricades and safety signs. Only persons aware of the on-site danger(s) and risk controls may be allowed to enter the hazardous work area (the platform in this case).
- **Permit-to-Work (PTW):** Implement a PTW system for all work at height locations where a worker could fall a distance of more than 3 metres.
- **Training and supervision:** Provide workers with safe work procedures, adequate training, and supervision so that the work can be carried out safely. This applies also to non-core work activities like tarpaulin sheet installation/removal and draining of rainwater.

For more information, refer to WSH (Work at Heights) Regulations 2013 and WSH Council's [Code of Practice for Working Safely at Heights](#)

* 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 liability on any party nor should it be taken to encapsulate all the responsibilities and obligations under the law.

Injured after fall from ladder

In two separate accidents, two workers sustained serious injuries after falling from ladders. Both workers have since recovered.

Accident 1

A worker was tasked to remove formwork plywood located at the ceiling. To access the ceiling plywood, the worker stood on a 2.4 metre vertical ladder leaning against the wall. While trying to remove the plywood with a crowbar, the worker lost his balance and fell from the ladder, landing on his back.

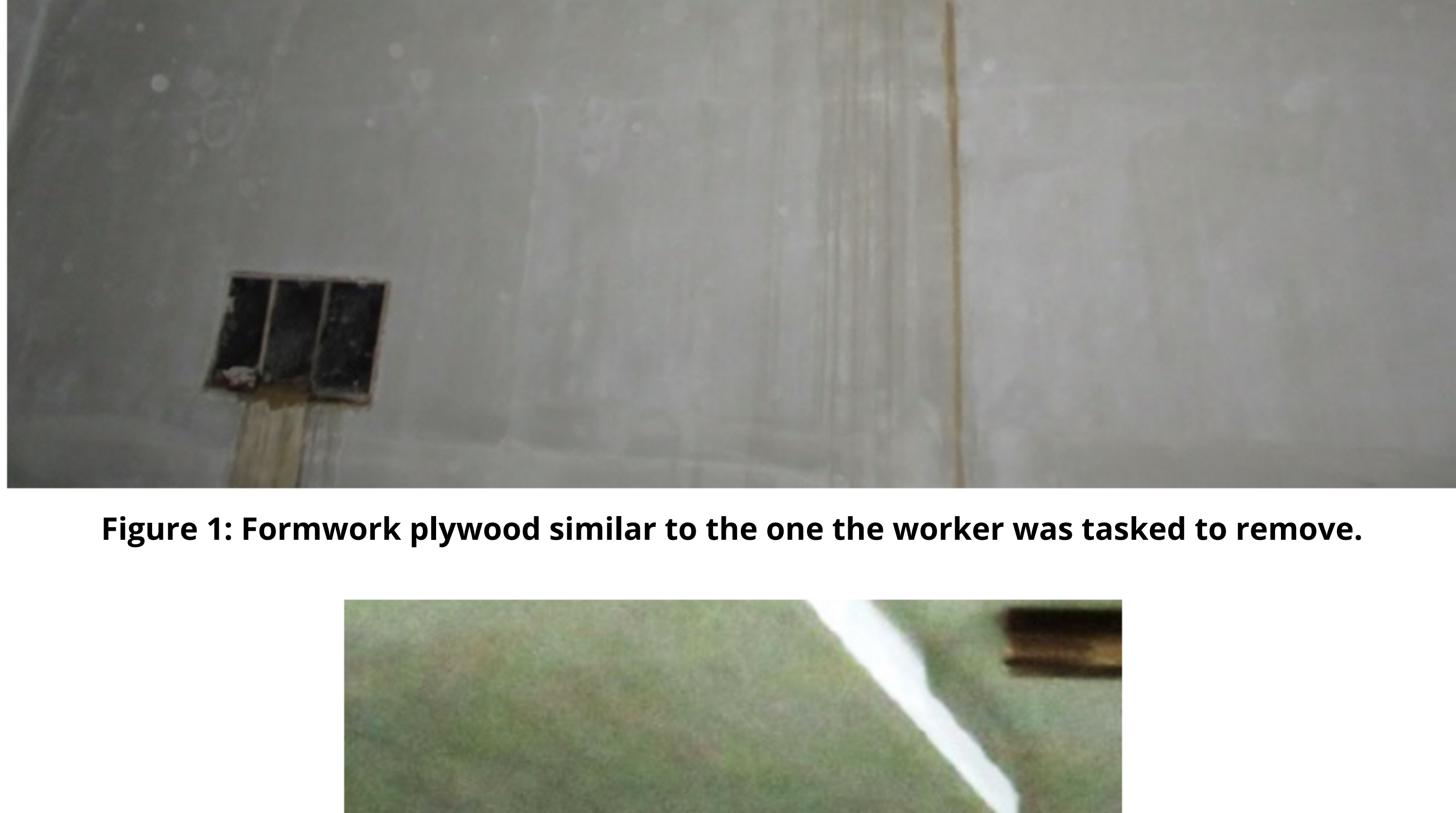


Figure 1: Formwork plywood similar to the one the worker was tasked to remove.

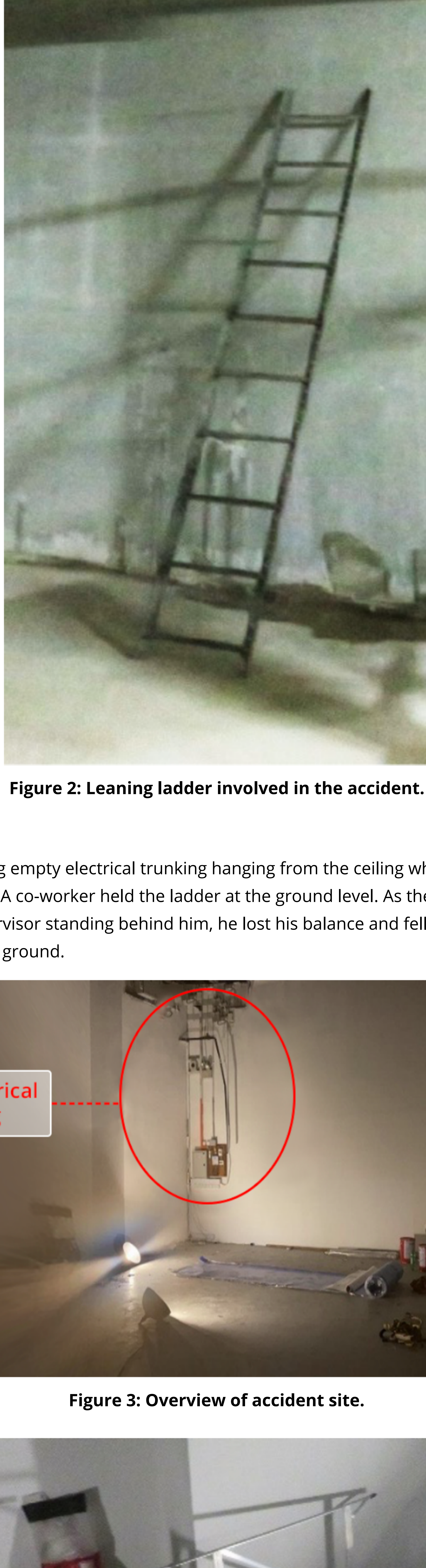


Figure 2: Leaning ladder involved in the accident.

Accident 2

A worker was removing empty electrical trunking hanging from the ceiling while standing on a 2.9 metre A-frame ladder. A co-worker held the ladder at the ground level. As the worker turned around to speak with his supervisor standing behind him, he lost his balance and fell from the ladder, hitting his head on the ground.

Figure 3: Overview of accident site.

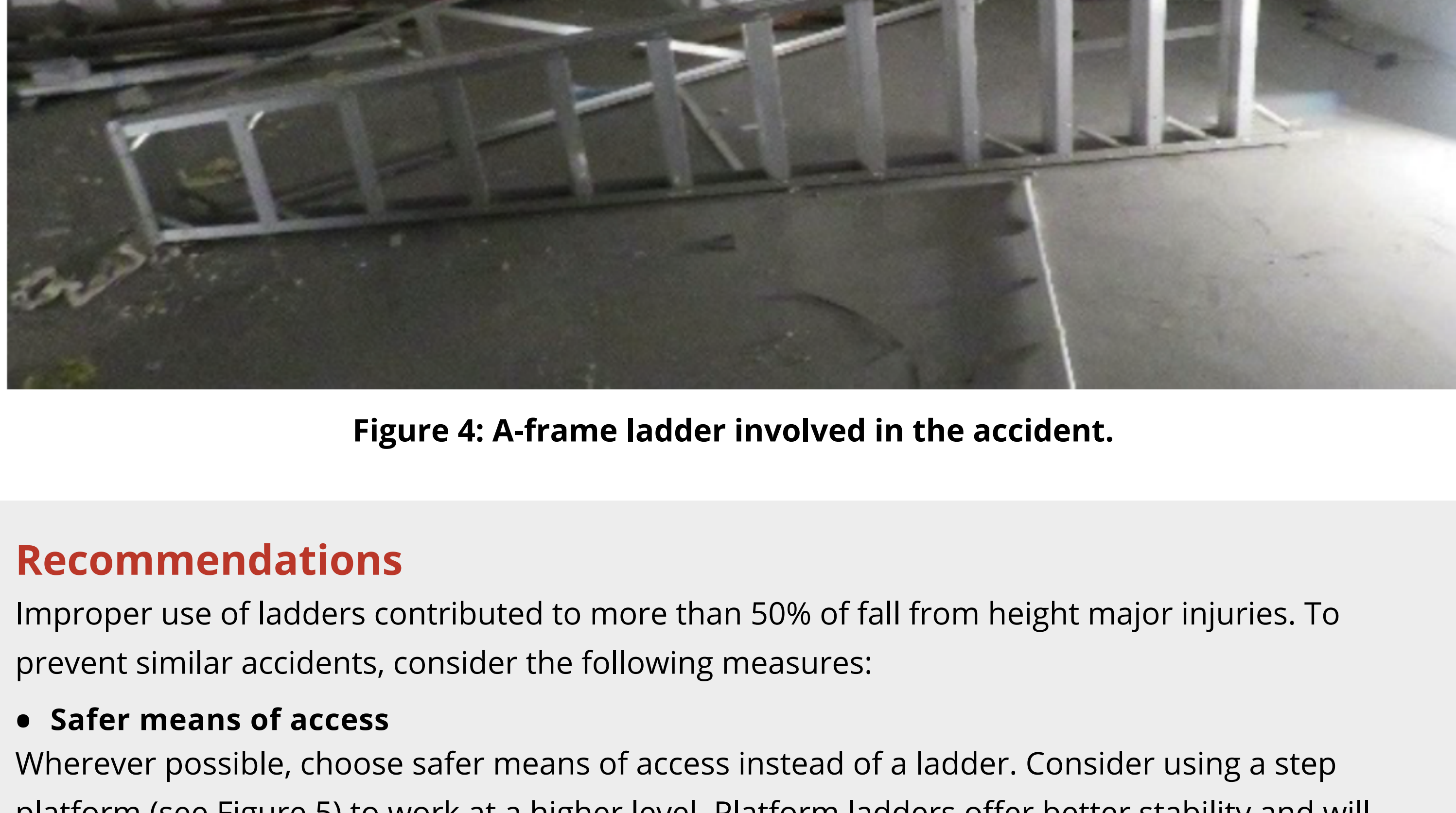


Figure 4: A-frame ladder involved in the accident.

Recommendations

Improper use of ladders contributed to more than 50% of fall from height major injuries. To prevent similar accidents, consider the following measures:

• Safer means of access

Wherever possible, choose safer means of access instead of a ladder. Consider using a step platform (see Figure 5) to work at a higher level. Platform ladders offer better stability and will allow workers to work safely for more complex tasks and for longer durations.



Figure 5: Step platform.

• Safe use of ladders

If a ladder must be used, carry out the following:

- Check that the ladder is in good working condition before use.
- Deploy ladders only on stable and flat ground.
- For leaning ladders, secure the base of the ladder to prevent ladder slippage.
- For A-frame ladders, ensure it is fully opened with spreaders locked.
- When using a ladder, always maintain three points of contact with the ladder. Use a platform ladder or other suitable work platform (e.g. a tower scaffold) if it is not possible to maintain three-point contact with the ladder during the work activity.
- Always keep your body weight centred between the ladder side rails. Do not lean away from the ladder as this may cause the ladder to topple.

• Work supervision

Brief workers on the Safe Work Procedure (SWP) for the task and provide on-site supervision to ensure workers closely follow the SWP.

• Personal protection

Equip workers with a safety helmet to protect against head injuries.

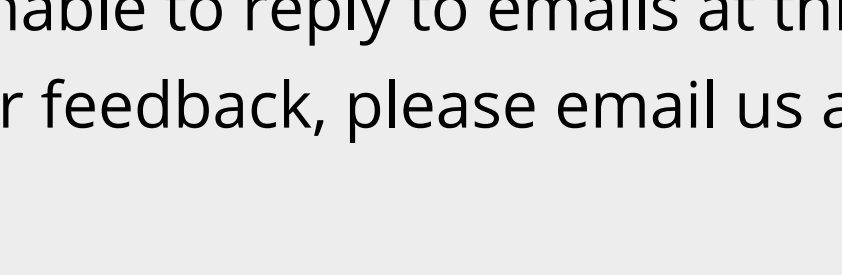
For more information, refer to the WSH Council's [Code of Practice for Working Safely at Heights](#), the WSH Council's [Ladder Safety Pack](#) and SS EN 131 Ladders.

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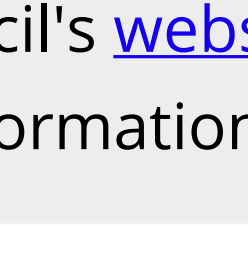
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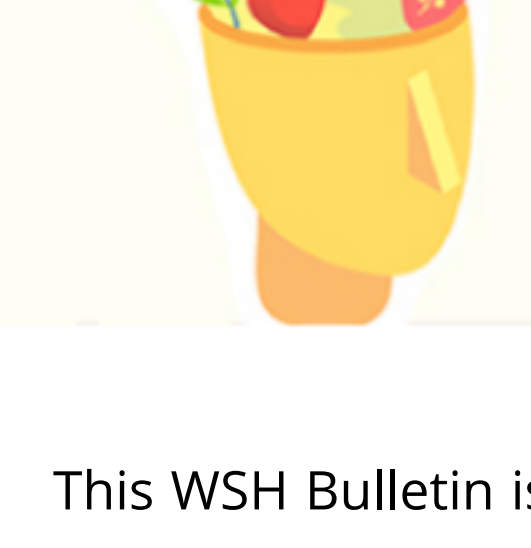


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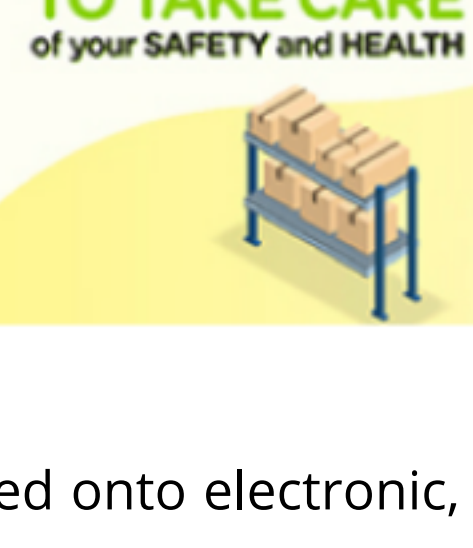


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