

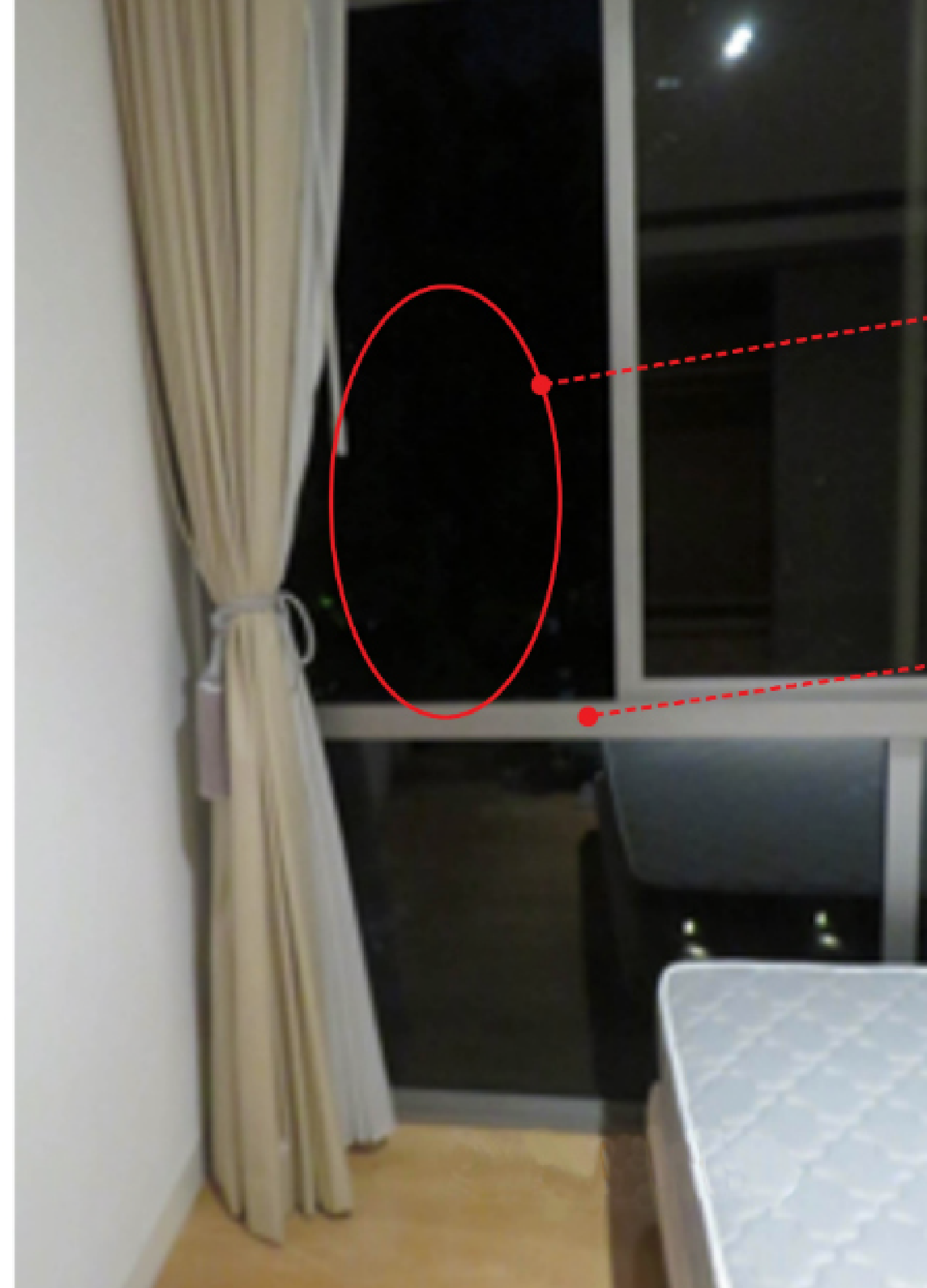
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December  
2022

# WSH ALERT

## FATAL ACCIDENT

### Worker fell off windowsill

On 26 November 2022, a group of workers was carrying out cleaning works within a condominium unit, which included window cleaning. One of the workers was straddling a bedroom windowsill while cleaning an external window pane. After completing the works, the worker tried to climb back into the unit but lost his balance while doing so. He fell about 9 metres to the ground below and died on the spot.



Overview of accident scene.

### Recommendations

Cleaning of windows can be a high-risk work activity when workers adopt an unsafe working position. To prevent similar accidents, consider the following measures:

- **Safe working position:** Workers should always adopt safe working positions. They should not reach or access work areas that can place them in unsafe working positions.
- **Window cleaning:** Avoid working at height where possible. Use telescopic water fed poles or clean windows from the inside. Where cleaning windows at height cannot be avoided, use suitable and proper access equipment, e.g. proper reach platforms or equipment such as mobile scaffolds and mobile elevated work platforms.
- **Safe plan of work:** Ensure that the work is properly planned, supervised, and carried out by competent workers. Develop and implement safe work methods and train workers to be familiar with them.
- **Fall protection:** Provide workers with personal fall-arrest systems with secured anchorage points when working at height or when there is a risk of falling from height such as working near open sides.
- **Effective communication:** Brief workers on all possible work hazards and control measures available. Remind workers to alert their supervisor and/or co-workers should they encounter any unsafe condition or situation.

For more information, please refer to WSH (Work at Heights) Regulations 2013 and WSH Council's [Code of Practice for Working Safely at Heights](#). Additional resources for work at heights include [WSH Circular on Safe Work at Heights at Completed Buildings](#), [WSH Guidelines on Personal Protective Equipment for Work at Heights](#), [WSH Guidelines on Anchorage, Lifelines and Temporary Edge Protection Systems](#) and [Case Studies Involving Work at Heights](#).

\* Information on the accident is based on preliminary investigations by the Ministry of Manpower as at 28 November 2022. 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.

### Worker fell from scaffold into the sea

On 25 November 2022, workers were erecting hanging scaffolds underneath a pier structure that was over the sea. One worker fell into the sea together with parts of the scaffold. The worker was wearing a life vest and a harness secured to the scaffold.

A search and rescue operation was immediately mounted and the body of the missing worker was found later that day.



Overview of accident scene.

### Recommendations

This case highlights the risks of scaffold collapse or failure. To prevent similar accidents, consider the following measures:

- **PE design:** All hanging scaffolds from which a person may fall more than 2 metres must be constructed and installed according to the design and drawings of a Professional Engineer (PE). The PE must take all reasonably practicable measures to ensure that his design is executed safely by any person who constructs, installs and uses the hanging scaffold according to his design.
- **Scaffold erection:** Proper erection of scaffold is important to prevent possible scaffold collapse. The following factors should be considered for safe scaffold erection:
  - The environment, site conditions and associated hazards.
  - No overloading as the scaffold is being erected progressively.
  - Scaffold members and components are of sound integrity and reliable.
- **Fall Prevention Plan (FPP):** Implement a site-specific FPP and a Permit-To-Work system for hazardous works at height during scaffold erection where falling risks are present.
- **Competent workers:** All scaffold workers must be trained and qualified to erect and dismantle scaffolds. They must be familiar with the proper and safe procedures of erecting and dismantling of the scaffolds used.
- **Personal protective equipment:** Provide workers with safety harnesses that come with a shock absorbing device. Attach the lanyard to a secured anchorage point on a firm structure such as the pier, instead of onto a scaffold.
- **Emergency rescue procedures:** An emergency rescue plan should be developed and put in place. Train workers to be familiar with rescue procedures.
- **Hazard communication:** Conduct toolbox briefings before each scaffold erection or dismantling activity. Explain to workers the onsite risks and control measures in place. Remind workers not to put themselves in any hazardous situation, observe all safe work procedures and adhere to instructions.

For more information, please refer to WSH (Scaffolds) Regulations 2011 and [WSH Council's Code of Practice for Working Safely at Heights](#).

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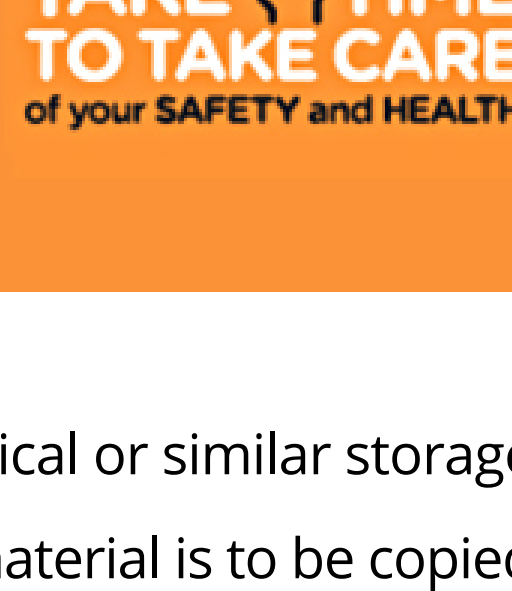
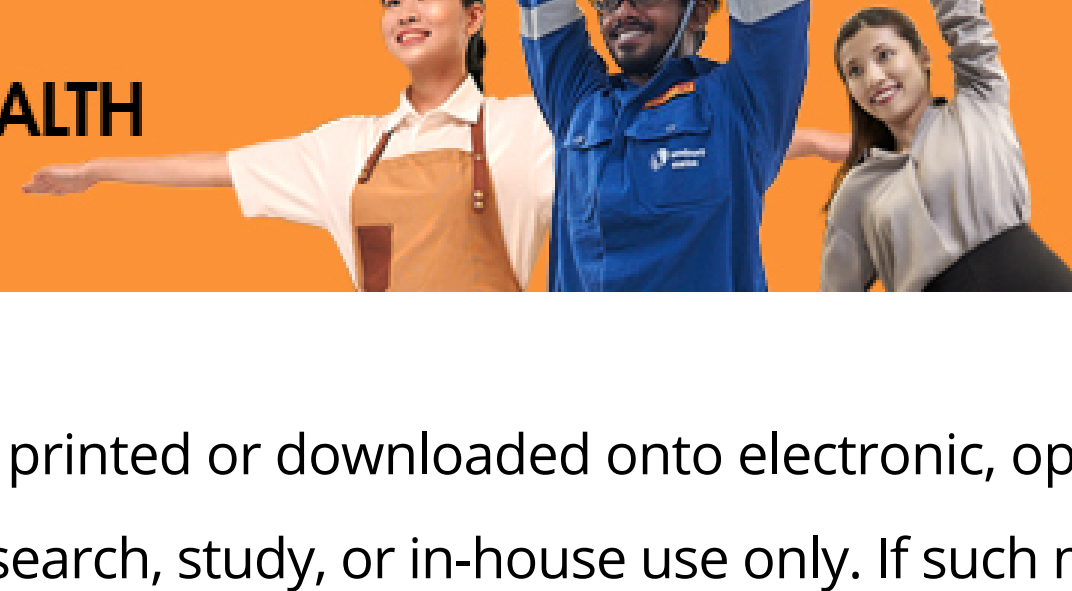


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