



21 May 2021, Ref 2122013

Accident Advisory: Worker trapped between two shipping containers

Ref: [2021096](#) WSH Alert Accident Notification dated 3 March 2021

On 21 February 2021, a worker was walking along a path between two shipping containers in a stockpile yard when one container (retrofitted into a rest area) suddenly moved, trapping him. The injured worker was subsequently pronounced dead at the scene by attending paramedics.



Figure 1: Overview of the accident scene.

Recommendations

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

Worksite considerations and site security

- The ground selected for stockpiling should be firm and provide a stable foundation. It should be relatively level, properly drained and should not be affected by nearby water catchment network (e.g. rivers, canals, drains), which may flood.
- Ensure site layout plan covers siting of rest area(s) a safe distance from stockpile areas and locations where potentially dangerous work activities are carried out.
- Confirm that workers are provided with a safe route of access to and egress from their designated work area(s) and rest area(s).
- Implement site security measures to ensure only authorised persons familiar with the on-site hazards are allowed at the worksite.

Safe stockpile management

- Wherever possible, freestanding stockpile inventory should be kept at a minimum, piled only to a low height, and further incoming stocks rejected once the stockpile yard has reached its maximum capacity. Note that a stockpile that is too tall may lead to potential stockpile collapse or slumping of materials, resulting in possible injury to workers and damage to surrounding infrastructure.
- Use containment solution (e.g. skip bin, open top container) for storage of loose materials to ensure stability of the stockpile and to prevent unplanned stockpile movement.
- Ensuring a minimum distance between stockpiles and between stockpiles and buildings/areas with human occupancy. The use of separating walls may be considered in areas where the minimum distance requirement cannot be met.

Hazard communication and reporting

- Brief workers (including new workers) on the on-site hazards, risk controls implemented and any additional precautions to be taken (e.g. to use only the designated routes for access and egress).
- Encourage workers to report hazards once a hazard is identified. This is so that suitable risk controls can be put in place to prevent an accident before it occurs.

Risk Assessment

Conduct a thorough Risk Assessment (RA) for all work activities to manage any foreseeable risk that may arise when working in a stockpile yard. The RA should cover, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- Stockpile site selection;
- Unplanned stockpile movement;
- Safety of the designated rest area(s);
- Safe route(s) for worker access and egress;
- Workplace housekeeping; and
- Emergency response plan.

Further Information

1. Workplace Safety and Health Act
2. Workplace Safety and Health (Risk Management) Regulations
3. Workplace Safety and Health (Construction) Regulations
4. Workplace Safety and Health (General Provisions) Regulations
5. Code of Practice on Workplace Safety and Health Risk Management
6. Singapore Standard SS 567: 2011 Code of Practice for Factory Layout – Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations
7. WSH Guidelines on Workplace Housekeeping
8. National Environment Agency's Code of Practice for Environmental Control Officers for Construction Sites (26 November 2020)
9. Land Transport Authority's Guidebook for Best Environmental Practices - Construction Waste Management at LTA Sites (October 2009)
10. Guideline for Stockpile Management (September 2019) by Environmental Protection Agency, Australian Capital Territory.

Information on the accident is based on preliminary investigations by the Ministry of Manpower as at 25 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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