

Safety & Health Alert No. 31 / 2016

Precautionary Measures for Window Replacement Work

Date: 19 August 2016
Our Ref. : HD(C)TS 4/49/26

In March 2016, there was a near miss incident that a window sash fell from a flat of 7/F to the ground during replacement of window hinges on a HA Site. We would like to draw your particular attention to the site safety requirements for maintenance and improvement works on HA sites which are usually carried out within occupied public rental housing estates with heavy pedestrian flow. To improve the site safety performance, contractors are strongly advised to take the following immediate actions and measures, including but not limited to :-

- a. Critically review the overall safety management, control and precautionary measures to ensure the proper enhancement measures, for window works, including the supervision, training and briefing of such operations and review of the work procedures, etc.;
- b. Strengthen management and supervision of your sub-contractors, e.g. improve communication with tenants and Non-Government Organisations about safety measures;
- c. Strengthen site supervision and inspection of works at all levels including involvement of senior management; and
- d. Foster proper site safety awareness and enhance safety training of all your supervisors, sub-contractors and workers, e.g. avoid works at rush hour etc.
- e. The following safety management plan should be adopted for pedestrian safety: -
 - i. Before commencement of works:
 - Coordinate with the Estate Management office and the affected organisations / shops on the ground floor to:
 - design the area to be cordoned off and the public access route;
 - avoid works at rush pedestrian hour;

- Appoint competent person to inspect the existing windows to be enhanced;
 - Assign a worker to guard on the ground floor to avoid unauthorised access to the area cordoned off;
- ii. During the window hinge replacement work:
- Install transportable temporary anchorage device;
 - Clean the grease on the windows;
 - Use glass sucker to hold the window and tie the sucker to the transportable temporary anchorage device before opening the window;
 - If the window hinges or screws were found seriously corroded, use a security metal chain to hold the window frame and glass together before installing the glass sucker;
 - After opening the window, the window should be securely tied by ropes using “cross” tying method;
 - Arrange two workers to carry out the work. One worker is responsible to hold the rope or the window, another worker then starts to loosen the screws of window hinge and takes the window off. All hand-held tools should have hand straps.
 - After installing new window hinge, the window should be securely tied by ropes using “cross” tying method and held by glass sucker. The works should be carried out by two workers, one worker is responsible to hold the rope or the window, another worker then installs the stainless steel rivet bolt. After the window has been securely fixed with hinges and screws, the worker could then release the ropes or window;
 - Check the stability of the window before removing the ropes and glass sucker.