

## **Safety & Health Alert No. 39 / 2018**

### **Fall through Floor Opening**

Date : 27 Sep 2018  
Our Ref. : HD(C)TS 4/49/26

In September 2018, a fatal accident involving fall from height occurred on a Housing Authority (HA) site. A worker fell for about 6m to the ground level through a floor opening on 1/F. In accordance with the statistics, about half of the fatal accidents involve fall from height in the past 10 years.

To prevent similar incidents on HA sites, contractors are strongly advised to take the following safety precautionary measures to safeguard site safety:

- a. Appoint competent persons to conduct risk assessments, and after considering the nature of the work and the impact of the surrounding environment, identify the potential hazards of all processes, especially the risks of fall from height; develop safe construction methods and procedures for related processes;
- b. Cover all openings or provide railings around floor openings, voids and slab edges to prevent people falling from height:
  - Cover all floor openings with a solid and sound material constructed to prevent the fall of persons, materials and article, and clearly and boldly marked as to show its purpose or be securely fixed in position; or
  - Provide rigid railings and toe boards around floor openings, voids and slab edges, with top railings and middle railings at a height of 900mm to 1150mm and 450mm to 600mm respectively above the surface of the slab, and toe boards of 200mm high above the surface of the slab; and provide safety net of sufficient size and strength to catch falling persons or objects;
- c. Provide appropriate safety harness to workers / employees and provide adequate, stable and sufficient anchor points so as to facilitate continuous anchorage of safety harness and independent lifelines onto the fall arrest systems, when it is not practicable to

provide covering to any openings and voids, or railings around floor openings and slab edges;

- d. Provide each worker with a suitable safety helmet equipped with a chin strap and ensure proper wearing of the same by the worker;
- e. Provide all relevant workers / employees with the required safety information, instructions and trainings to ensure they are familiar with the relevant safety construction procedures and adopt the safety measures;
- f. Develop and implement an effective monitoring system to ensure that the above safety measures are implemented.

The above precautionary measures are by no means exhaustive. Contractors are required to conduct risk assessments, formulate safe working methods and implement safety control measures to eliminate, mitigate and address hazards. Please refer to relevant legislation and guidelines including Factories and Industrial Undertakings Regulations, Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations, publications of Labour Department such as A Guide to the Provisions for Safe Places of Work under Part VA of the Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations, and Guidance Notes on Classification and Use of Safety Belts and their Anchorage Systems.

In this connection, your attention is also drawn to the Work Safety Alert - Fall through a floor opening published by Labour Department (LD). If you have any enquiries concerning the Work Safety Alert of Labour Department, please contact the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labour Department on 2559 2297, or email: [enquiry@labour.gov.hk](mailto:enquiry@labour.gov.hk). The Work Safety Alert can also be downloaded through the link below:

[www.labour.gov.hk/eng/osh/WSA\\_Fall\\_through\\_a\\_floor\\_opening\\_Sep2018\\_eng.pdf](http://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/osh/WSA_Fall_through_a_floor_opening_Sep2018_eng.pdf)