

Safety & Health Alert No. 14/2019

Construction Industry Council Safety Message - Struck by falling timber and fell to death when working at an exterior working platform

Date : 26 March 2019
Our Ref. : HD(C)TS 4/49/26

A worker fell to death after being hit by a falling timber on his head when he was working at the exterior working platform on a construction site.

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

As contractor / subcontractor / Employer:

1. The exterior wall work and any demolition procedures must be properly planned and arrangements for partial or segmented construction should be made;
2. Establish and maintain an effective coordination and liaison system between contractors / subcontractors / employers and different levels of management to ensure that the relevant risk control plans are implemented;
3. An effective monitoring and control system should be developed, implemented and maintained to ensure that working procedures at different heights do not take place at the same time unless adequate measures have been taken to ensure that the relevant work does not affect each other; and
4. Workers must be provided with adequate information, instructions, training and supervision to ensure safety at work.

As Frontline Supervisors and workers:

1. When working, workers shall ensure that there is no construction above; if there is a material difference in the construction environment from the original plan, such as

proceeding of demolition at upper level, the work shall be suspended and reported to the supervisor;

2. The scaffolding platform should also be properly planked, with protective measures for the platform on several levels below, and regular cleaning of rubbish to avoid falling of debris such as timber members;
3. Ensure that there are no loose materials or excessive accumulation of materials placed or stacked on the edge of the building or openings to prevent material from falling;
4. In addition to the railing at floor edge, toe board should also be provided to prevent material from falling; and
5. Workers must have received appropriate training and possessed sufficient experience with correct use of personal protective equipment (including helmet strips).

As safety practitioner:

1. Conduct risk assessment and safety construction procedures for exterior walls and scaffolding works; and
2. Develop and implement effective proactive inspection plans to ensure strict compliance with safety measures and to report non-compliance with safety requirements.

The above only lists out a few main points on safety. For details, please refer to the Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety the Guidance Notes on the Selection, Use and Maintenance of Safety Helmets issued by the Labour Department and the Guidelines on Planking Arrangement for Providing Working Platforms on Bamboo Scaffolds issued by the Construction Industry Council.