

## **Safety & Health Circular No. 24 / 2012**

### **Safety Alert for Working at Height**

Date: 31 July 2012

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

Recent fatal accident involving worker falling from height on construction sites have aroused our utmost concerns. Contractors have to ensure construction workplace safety and operations at site must be supervised and carefully managed at all levels to prevent accidents. Extracted below are some key points to be attended, which are certainly not exhaustive -

1. The contractor shall identify and rectify the hazardous conditions of persons working at height in the construction site to safeguard any person against falling from height; plan for emergencies and rescue, and appropriately supervise work at height; conduct risk assessment and implement precautionary measures as a safeguard.
2. The contractor shall ensure that suitable and adequate safe access to and egress from every place of work on the site is provided and properly maintained.
3. Common fall from height hazards at site include unprotected edge or opening at a place of work; improper design and construction of a work place; inadequate or insecure support or anchoring; improper maintenance of a place of work.
4. The contractor shall take adequate steps to prevent workers from falling. These including the use and maintenance of working platforms; guard-rails, barriers, toe-boards and fences; coverings for openings; gangways and runs.
5. The contractor shall ensure that scaffold or working platform is erected, altered or dismantled by workmen who are adequately trained and possess adequate experience; and under the immediate supervision of a competent person. The scaffold/working platform should be inspected by a competent person before being taken into use for the first time. The scaffold/working platform should also be inspected by a competent person after any alteration; any exposure to adverse weather or at regular intervals not exceeding 14 days.

6. When it is impracticable to provide safe scaffold/working platform for working at height, the contractor should provide suitable and adequate safety nets and safety belts. The contractor should ensure the proper use of the safety belts by the workers, and attach the safety belts continuously to a suitable and secure anchorage. When it is impracticable to provide such safety nets, the contractor should provide suitable and adequate safety belts.
7. The contractor shall provide sufficient information, training and supervision to ensure the safety and health of all persons employed.
8. Please refer to the following safety requirements:
  - A Guide to the Provisions for Safe Places of Work under Part VA of the Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations on Labour Department's website, hyperlink: <http://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/os/A/PartVA.pdf>
  - Guidance Notes on Classification and Use of Safety Belts and their Anchorage Systems, hyperlink: <http://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/os/C/belt.pdf>
  - Chapter 59I Title: Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations Regulations 38 and 40.

Should there be any queries, please contact of OSHC on 3106 5672 or the Labour Department hotline 2559 2297.