



WSH Council Circular - Incidents update for Facilities Management (FM) Industry

6 December 2022

Dear Members,

WSH Council would like to share with members the 3 WSH incidents that happened recently in the FM industry and remind all FM stakeholders to take immediate actions to implement adequate WSH measures at the workplace to prevent similar incidents from happening.

The first case involved the unauthorised operation of Refuse Handling Equipment (RHE) which resulted in a serious injury and the second was a worker who was hit by a reversing lorry which resulted in fatal injury. The third case was a worker who fell to the ground below and died after cleaning an external windowpane in a condominium unit.

For the safety of our cleaners, **the WSH Council has put together the 3 cases and their recommendations.** Kindly share the attached cases and recommendations with your working partners and their contractors, colleagues, training providers and industry members for their awareness, please.

For more information, please refer to WSH (Work at Heights) Regulations 2013 and WSH Council's [Code of Practice for Working Safely at Heights](#). Additional resources for work at heights include [WSH Circular on Safe Work at Heights at Completed Buildings](#), [WSH Guidelines on Personal Protective Equipment for Work at Heights](#), [WSH Guidelines on Anchorage, Lifelines and Temporary Edge Protection Systems](#) and [Case Studies Involving Work at Heights](#).

Thank you.

With best regards

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1. Cleaner injured by Refuse Handling Equipment

On 23 September 2022, a bin lifter toppled and landed on a cleaner while he was trying to pull the decoupled lifter of the Refuse Handling Equipment (RHE) in a private residential premise. He initiated to assist the waste collection crew without the crew's knowledge. He suffered fractures on his left leg. RHE requires specialised training to operate safely, on 16 October 2021, a conservancy worker was recently killed while trying to operate an RHE.

Recommendation

- 1) Tighten access control on RHEs and to bin centres, such as providing lock and key to RHE's panels and bin centres' entrance.
- 2) Restrict operation of RHEs to authorised and trained personnel only e.g., waste collection crew.
- 3) Conduct and review Risk Assessment (RA) and Safe Work Procedures (SWP) for RHE operations and identify all foreseeable hazards (learning from past accidents shared), such as preventing unauthorised access to RHEs and bin centres.
- 4) Communicate the RA and SWP to all workers (e.g., cleaners) who are required to handle RHE, e.g., dos and don'ts when handling RHEs
- 5) Training must be kept updated and documented.



Location where the bin lifter landed on the cleaner

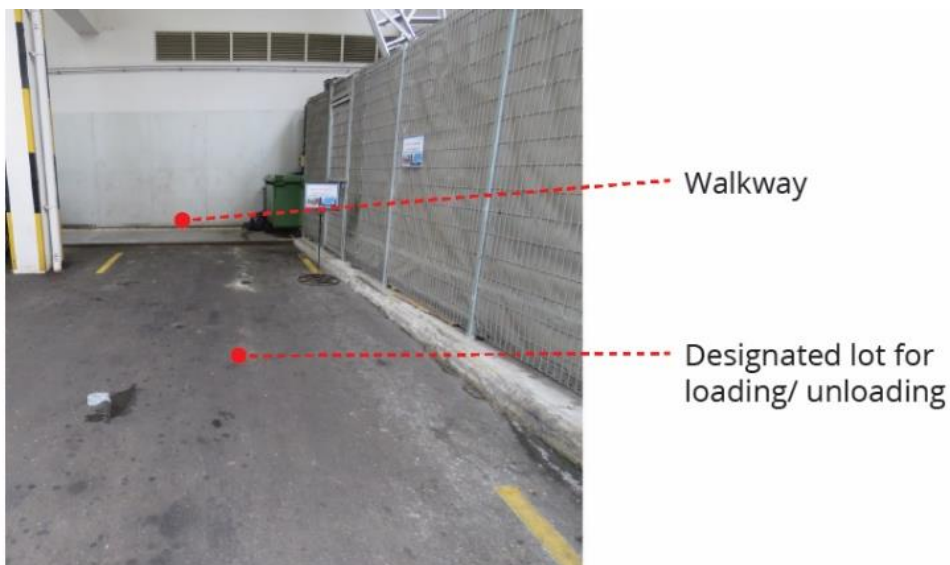
2. Cleaner killed by reversing lorry

On 5 October 2022, a cleaner was hit by a reversing lorry when he was at a loading/ unloading bay. The cleaner was sent to the hospital where he passed away on the same day.

Recommendation

1. Implement a workplace traffic management plan, including for vehicle and human traffic around the loading/ unloading bays. Install guard rails and wheel stops to protect pedestrians. Place convex mirrors in strategic locations.
2. Instruct drivers to check their blind spots. Deploy a ground guide to assist in safe parking.
3. Install vehicle reversing alarm.
4. Put in place safe cleaning procedure. Schedule cleaning work during off-peak hours. Place signage at entrance of parking lot. Instruct cleaners to look out for vehicles.
5. Provide cleaners with highly visible reflective vests.
6. Consider using reversing cameras for drivers to better monitor blind spots.

For more information, refer to [WSH Council's Code of Practice on WSH Risk Management](#), [WSH Guidelines on Workplace Traffic Safety Management](#) and [Sample Checklist for Workplace Traffic Management](#).



3. Cleaner fell off windowsill

On 26 November 2022, a group of workers was carrying out cleaning works within a condominium unit, which included window cleaning. One of the workers was straddling a bedroom windowsill while cleaning an external window pane. After completing the works, the worker tried to climb back into the unit but lost his balance while doing so. He fell about 9 metres to the ground below and died on the spot.

Recommendations:

1. Safe working position: Workers should always adopt safe working positions. They should not reach or access work areas that can place them in unsafe working positions.
2. Window cleaning: Avoid working at height where possible. Use telescopic water fed poles or clean windows from the inside. Where cleaning windows at height cannot be avoided, use suitable and proper access equipment, e.g. proper reach platforms or equipment such as scaffolds and mobile elevated work platforms.
3. Safe plan of work: Ensure that the work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent workers. Develop and implement safe work methods and train worker to be familiar with them.
4. Fall protection: Provide workers with personal fall arrest systems with secured anchorage points when working at height or when there is a risk of falling from height such as working near open sides.
5. Effective communication: Brief workers on all possible work hazards and control measures available. Remind workers to alert their supervisor and/or co-workers should they encounter any unsafe conditions or situation.

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