



Work Safety Alert Buried in Coal Ash inside a Silo

1. **Date of Accident :** February 2017
2. **Place of Accident :** A silo of a public utility company
3. **Summary :**

While a team of workers was clearing coal ash inside a silo, one of the workers was buried to death by coal ash aggregate that collapsed suddenly.

4. **Work Safety Alert for Contractors/ Employers :**

To ensure the safety of workers/ employees undertaking work inside storage facilities of confined nature such as silos, the contractors/ employers should:

- appoint a competent person to conduct task-specific risk assessments to identify all potential hazards associated with the work inside the confined space, taking into account the work environment and the nature of work;
- avoid man-entry into the storage facility as far as possible where risks of serious injuries, loss of consciousness or asphyxiation are identified;
- where man-entry into the storage facility cannot be avoided, provide and maintain a safe system of work which should include, but not limited to, the following:
 - formulating safe work methods and procedures to eliminate all hazards that have been identified by the risk assessments, precautionary measures should include the adoption of a permit-to-work system to ensure that no worker is allowed to enter into or work in the confined space unless all necessary safety measures are implemented;



- if free flowing solid is kept or remains in the storage facility, taking effective steps to prevent any collapse or in-rush of such free flowing solid that may cause asphyxiation or the inability to reach a respirable environment due to entrapment;
- minimising the number of workers entering the confined space at one time;
- ensuring that only certified workers are allowed to enter the confined space;
- ensuring that every worker entering the confined space is properly wearing suitable personal protective equipment as necessary, including safety harness connected to a lifeline that is strong enough to enable the worker to be pulled out and approved breathing apparatus;
- assigning a person to standby at the entrance of the confined space who is strong enough to pull each worker out in case of emergency throughout the time during which any worker is inside the confined space;
- ensuring that effective communication should be maintained among the person who standby at the entrance and the workers inside of the confined space;
- devising and implementing an emergency response plan, covering all suitable rescue arrangements and appropriate emergency procedures; and ensuring that every worker involved in the work is familiar with the plan; and
- if the conditions of the confined space have materially altered, assigning a competent person to re-assess the situation and specify what further precautions are required in response to the changes to ensure the safety and health of the workers/ employees concerned;



- providing all workers/ employees concerned with the necessary safety information, instruction and training, and ensuring that they are familiar with the safe work procedures and safety measures; and
- establishing and implementing an effective monitoring and control system to ensure all safety measures are strictly followed.

5. Reference :

- [Safe Systems of Work](#)¹
- [Five Steps to Risk Assessment](#)¹
- [Five Steps to Information, Instruction and Training](#)¹
- [A Brief Guide to the Factories and Industrial Undertakings \(Confined Spaces\) Regulation](#)¹
- [Code of Practice for Safety and Health at Work in Confined Spaces](#)¹

DISCLAIMER

This Work Safety Alert (“the Alert”) is issued at the earliest possible opportunity after a serious accident with a view to drawing the attention of interested parties to the general safety precautionary measures necessary to protect people engaging in similar work activities. The material contained in the Alert constitutes general guidance only. It does not reduce, limit, or replace, any legal obligations upon any person to comply with any statutory duties under relevant legislation. Users such as Managers and Supervisors should make their own evaluation of the information contained in the Alert to determine if it can be applied to their own situations and practices. The Labour Department does NOT accept any responsibilities for any loss or damage resulting from the use of or failure to use of the information on the Alert.

Note: The material contained in the Alert is not exhaustive, and will be supplemented/ adjusted where necessary if more relevant information comes to light.

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