Workplace Fires Fatality File



Man dies in Tuas fire involving gas cylinders; 46th workplace fatality of the year

A 38-year-old man died during a workplace accident on Friday (Dec 30) morning after a fire involving gas cylinders broke out at a building in Tuas.

The India national, who was pronounced dead at the scene, was the 46th workplace fatality in 2022.

A 43-year-old worker who was injured in the incident was taken to the hospital.

Preliminary investigations suggested that the fire at 21 Tuas Avenue 3 was triggered by the uncontrolled release of flammable gas from the cylinders, said a Ministry of Manpower spokesperson (MOM) on Saturday.

According to a Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) alert on Jan 11, 2023, preliminary investigations showed the cylinders contained remnant acetylene, which fuelled the explosion when it was released during maintenance.

The employer and occupier, Asia Technical Gas, has been instructed by MOM to stop all work activities involving the checking and maintenance of flammable gas cylinders.

The Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) said it was alerted to the blaze at about 9.05am, and about 40 people had evacuated prior to their arrival.

SCDF and police investigations are ongoing.

“Spent gas cylinders may contain significant amounts of remnant gas, which can cause death or serious injuries when released,” said the WSH Council.

It called on all companies storing or handling flammable gas cylinders to undertake an urgent assessment of their safety measures.

MOM said that when dealing with gas cylinders that contain flammable gases, measures must be put in place to prevent any accumulation of such gases and ensure that the work environment is free from ignition sources.

“Under the heightened safety period, more companies are paying greater attention to workplace safety but there continue to be segments that perform poorly and need to step up,” said the MOM spokesperson.

“To date, 11 companies have been debarred from employing new foreign workers for fatal and major accidents, and their CEOs and directors had to personally account for the accidents and ensure that safety lapses at their workplaces were rectified.”

This latest incident comes after a 31-year-old man died following a workplace accident at Rifle Range Road on Tuesday.

The worker died after he was struck and pinned by a machine that toppled while it was being transferred by a forklift. A 62-year-old man was later arrested for causing death by negligent act.

The Manpower Ministry had earlier called for a six-month period of heightened safety from Sep 1 to Feb 28, 2023, in response to a higher rate of workplace fatalities.

It announced in September that companies in higher-risk sectors were required to conduct a mandatory safety time-out to review safety procedures, as part of the measures introduced under the heightened safety period.