



Work Safety Alert Collapse of Soil

1. **Date of Accident :** July 2013
2. **Place of Accident :** A construction site in Yuen Long
3. **Summary :**

A worker was trapped to his death by collapsing soil while conducting manual-digging of a tunnel about 4 metres below road surface.

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

Contractors/employers undertaking tunnel excavation works should:

- before the commencement of the excavation work, appoint a competent person to conduct risk assessments covering considerations of the diameter of the tunnel and the soil nature and conditions;
- avoid manual digging of tunnel as far as practicable;
- where manual digging of tunnel cannot be avoided, implement a safe system of work covering the following safety measures:
 - ensure that only certified workers are allowed to work inside the tunnel and provide them with adequate information, instruction and training;
 - afford continuous protection the risk of soil collapse for the workers engaged in the digging work as far as practicable, including timely erection of suitable shoring or shields;
 - ensure that every part of the excavation or earthwork are examined and certified safe by a competent person;



- ensure effective communication with the workers working inside the tunnel;
- formulate and implement appropriate emergency procedures to deal with any serious and imminent danger to workers inside the tunnel; and
- exercise effective monitoring and supervision to ensure that the above safety measures are strictly followed.

5. Reference :

- [Five Steps to Risk Assessment](#)¹
- [Safe Systems of Work](#)¹
- [A Guide to the Provisions for Excavations and Miscellaneous Safety under the Construction Sites \(Safety\) Regulations](#)¹
- [A Brief Guide to the Factories and Industrial Undertakings \(Confined Spaces\) Regulation](#)¹
- [Code of Practice – 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

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