

# Safety Alert



Ref No: SA-003-2024

05 March 2024

## Lone working in unoccupied buildings

Due to the nature of their land ownership and their operations, ports are often responsible for legacy structures on their premises. These structures can fall into disrepair if not regularly inspected and suitably maintained.

### What happened:

Whilst surveying a unoccupied building, an asbestos surveyor fell through an unmaintained wooden hatch, falling 1.2 metres into a water filled sump pit two metres deep. Fortunately, the surveyor was uninjured, however the potential outcome of the incident could have been significantly more serious.

This alert has been issued in recognition of the potential severity of the incident.

### Considerations for members:

- Review the portfolio of legacy and unoccupied structures under your control.
- Consider whether condition surveys of these buildings should be undertaken or updated to ensure that any hazards are known.
- Produce a register of unoccupied structures to list all known risks.
- Ensure that employees or contractors carrying out tasks in and around these structures are aware of the risks on the register.
- Review lone working procedures to ensure that the risks of working in unoccupied buildings is considered.
- Provide dynamic risk assessment process for those carrying out maintenance activities
- Promote stop the job authority throughout the organisation, to encourage employees to stop any activities which they believe are unsafe.

The information forming the basis of this alert has been provided confidentially and some details have been anonymised. PSS thanks the contributor for submitting details of this incident to be shared.