

# Soil collapse at UMS: No compromise on safety of workers — NIOSH

TBP 09.09.2025 P.02

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Safety standards at worksites need to be enhanced in line with amendments made to related legislation, said National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Chairman Chong Chieng Jen.

He stated that the Occupational Safety and Health (Amendment) Act 2022, which came into effect on June 1 last year, has expanded the scope of protection for workers by requiring employers to conduct systematic risk assessments.

"Section 18B (of the Act) mandates every employer, principal, developer, or contractor to carry out a systematic risk assessment before any work is undertaken.

This assessment must identify workplace hazards, evaluate the

level of risk, and establish control measures to prevent accidents, injuries, or occupational diseases," he said in a statement Monday.

He was commenting on the incident where a worker died after being buried by a soil collapse at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) on September 6.

At the same time, he noted, Section 29A stipulates that every workplace with five or more employees must have a trained Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Coordinator to assist in identifying hazards, ensuring procedural compliance, and fostering a safe work culture.

Additionally, he said NIOSH also emphasises the importance of compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health

(Construction Work) (Design and Management) Regulations 2024, which came into force on June 1, 2024.

"These regulations introduce a proactive approach where clients, designers, and contractors are required to plan, manage, and monitor safety throughout the project lifecycle, from the pre-construction to post-construction phases," he said.

In the incident around 1:45 pm last Saturday, a 22-year-old male worker was reported to be buried nearly three meters deep while carrying out pipe-laying work on the UMS campus in Kota Kinabalu. The victim was successfully extricated by the fire department with the assistance of the police and medical officers but was confirmed dead at the scene. — Bernama