

Safety & Health Circular No. 25/2014

Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety

Date: 17 July 2014
Our Ref. : HD(C)TS 4/49/26

The Commissioner for Labour has issued an updated edition of the Code of Practice ("CoP") for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety, pursuant to section 7A of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance ("FIUO"), Cap. 59. Section 6A of the FIUO sets out the general duties of a proprietor to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of all persons employed by him, and the relevant provisions in the Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations set out the specific requirements regarding safety at work involving the construction and maintenance of bamboo scaffolds to prevent falls from height. The CoP provides practical guidance for compliance with these requirements.

The updated CoP provides contractors with guidance on how to fulfill their safety responsibilities of providing working platforms on bamboo scaffolds, so as to ensure workers' safety at work on bamboo scaffolds. The relevant amendments to section 4 and the consequential amendments to the contents page, section 1, section 5 and Appendix III of the CoP are set out in the Annex to this letter for your reference.

The updated part of the CoP should be read in conjunction with the "Guidelines on Planking Arrangement for Providing Working Platforms on Bamboo Scaffolds" ("the Guidelines") published by the Construction Industry Council ("CIC") on 30 May 2014, which set out the delineation of safety responsibilities between main contractors and subcontractors on planking arrangement for working platforms on bamboo scaffolds.

This CoP has a special legal status : although failure to observe any provision of this Code is not itself an offence, that failure may be taken by a court in criminal proceedings as a relevant factor in determining whether or not a person has breached the relevant safety and health legislation under the FIUO. The Labour Department ("LD") will also make reference to the Guidelines published by CIC when enforcing safety regulations relating to the use of bamboo scaffolds for work at height.

The updated CoP will be published in the Gazette on 27 June 2014. Bilingual copies of the CoP can be downloaded from LD's website "http://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/content2_8b.htm" and are available in the headquarters and the regional offices of LD. If you have enquiries on this matter, please contact Miss WONG Pui-lam, Linda, Divisional Occupational Safety Officer at telephone number 2852 4960.