

Keynote Address by Mr CHAN Siu-tack Assistant Director (Estate Management) 2, Housing Department

Welcome to the Site Safety Forum for Works Contracts and Property Services Contracts 2014.

First of all, I would like to thank the guests for their invaluable advice on risk assessment of new works projects offered in the previous session. I am sure all these views and suggestions will encourage the industry to reflect on the risks at workplace.

As a responsible landlord and employer, the Hong Kong Housing Authority will closely work with the industry to strengthen site safety relating to estate management, maintenance and improvement works. Compared with the accident rate of 4.8 accidents per 1 000 workers in 2012, the accident rate of the Housing Authority's maintenance works decreased by 15% to 4.1 accidents per 1 000 workers in 2013. This figure is much lower than the overall accident rate of the construction industry in the same year, which is 40.8 accidents per 1 000 workers, showing that the joint efforts of the Department and contractors on improving site safety have borne fruit. The Safety Auditing System for the Maintenance and Improvement Works has been operating for over a year. An analysis of the data from the auditing system reveals that among the 14 safety management elements being audited, the contractors do not perform well in risk assessment, which is also the theme of today's Forum.

Estate maintenance management involves numerous potential risks at work. Monitoring estate maintenance works presents certain difficulties as the work locations are dispersed and the time required for such works is comparatively short. In addition, the working space in this kind of works is usually very small and the locations may involve a household's home or an access, so it warrants careful consideration when conducting safety risk assessment. Nevertheless, I call on our contractors to conduct proper risk assessment and take appropriate actions to actively monitor the implementation of works in order to improve site safety in related industries.

Our Estate Management Division will further develop and enforce the three strategies for site safety, namely:

- Sustained efforts to encourage research and training and to promote safety awareness;
- Strengthening contract requirements and management; and
- Procurement strategy and performance monitoring mechanism with incentives and sanctions.

At this point, I would like to share with you the measures taken by the Housing Department in the past year and the measures to be implemented soon:

- To strengthen the specifications for safety certification, starting from 1 October last year, the property management services providers and cleansing service contractors on the Housing Authority's approved lists are required to achieve the Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series - OHSAS 18001. Also, a "safety audit" is included in the demerit point scheme for tender assessment of property management services provider contracts, where services providers will be allotted **negative** points for past serious site accidents at work sites under their management.



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- With regard to lift works and building services maintenance contracts, we have introduced a site safety auditing system for the maintenance and improvement works in lift modernisation contracts and lift addition contracts since September last year to cater for the special work processes involved in these two types of works. Besides, a surprise safety inspection system is imposed in the requirements of all building services maintenance contracts to improve works quality and raise the standards in the management of site safety provisions.
- We have also tried to improve the contractors' performance on site safety through procurement strategies. Starting from this year, building maintenance contractors who fail in the safety audit for two consecutive quarters will be barred from tendering. A Preferential Tender Award System (PTAS) was introduced in the tender invitations of district maintenance contracts in the fourth quarter of last year. Under the PTAS, records of serious accidents become part of the tender assessment criteria, and we are now exploring the feasibility of extending the PTAS to the tendering of lift modernisation contracts. All these show that the Department pays great attention to the contractors' records of accidents on site.
- Incidents involving working at height often cause serious injuries or fatalities. Therefore, we have set up a working group on scaffolding safety with a view to strengthening the notification mechanism of scaffolding installation and the monitoring of competent persons of scaffolding. We will also establish a surprise safety inspection system for building works to enhance the safety of working at height. In 2012, the Housing Authority had three accidents concerning maintenance work at height and two in 2013. We will proactively monitor the situation so as to achieve zero accident.

Lastly, I would like to call on all my colleagues and working partners to support our cause, and sincerely hope that we can pull our efforts together in providing a safe and good working environment for all the workers in Hong Kong.

Thank you.

