

Then, it's the time for the forum.

The guest speakers on the stage will follow the theme of the topics to have a more in-depth discussion.

We're honoured to have invited many industry experts to come and participate in the forum concerning new works projects, and share their insights on safety measures on construction sites.

Based on the following guest speakers' discussions, please feel free to take and submit the question slips to any of our staff if you've any questions.

We'll have a Q&A session afterwards.

The guest speakers will answer your questions.

Now, shall we invite the guest speakers to come to the stage and be seated?

Speakers include Mr. Cheng Yuen Hung, Divisional Occupational Safety Officer, Labour Department,

Mr. Ho Yat Fan, Vice-chairman, Safety Subcommittee, The Lift & Escalator Contractors Association,

Mr. Wong Chi Man, representative of The Hong Kong Federation of Electrical and Mechanical Contractors Limited,

Mr. Lai Kwong Fook, representative of The Hong Kong Construction Association,

Mr. Tong Chun Wah, representative of The Hong Kong Construction Association,

Mr. Tang Tak Yan, representative of The Hong Kong Construction Association,

Mr. Lawrence Ng, President of Hong Kong Construction Sub-Contractors Association, and Mr. Jack Fong, Senior Consultant of the Occupational Safety and Health Council.

We are glad to have invited Mr. Lee Kam Hung, an experienced journalist to be the facilitator of the forum. Mr. Lee, please.

The forum will now officially start. I will now pass the time to Mr. Lee.

Mr. Lee:

A master sculptor

once accepted a large-scale works project for a county government to construct a decorated archway.

He certainly worked very hard to complete the works contract. The product was very lively and vivid. When the new decorated archway was completed, the county mayor and other officials hosted the opening ceremony together.

Indeed, the whole sculpture was perfectly done,

but the mayor required modification and improvement on certain parts just to show his authority.

The sculptor followed the instruction with no doubt and he got a ladder.

He climbed up the archway after taking safety measures. He worked as if he was really modifying the archway.

The people below could not see his movement up there but seeing lime powders fall like rain. After an hour,

the sculptor came down and told the mayor that the archway had been modified and asked if

it's better than before? The mayor agreed.

The sculptor showed appreciation of the wisdom of the mayor who could point out the problem.

After that, his apprentice asked the sculptor,

"Master, those officials actually know nothing about these.

And they don't understand sculpture. But you've followed them, isn't it bad?"

"My apprentice, you don't understand. Officials always enjoy showing off their authority.

Can you see what this is?"

There's a bag of lime powder on the sculptor's hand.

Indeed, he did nothing up the archway but just showering the powers down.

"It looked as if I was modifying. You should bear it in mind. This is called political psychology.

Don't you understand?"

"I do. I got it."

A few years later, the apprentice became a master sculptor.

On one occasion, he had to work on a large-scale works project, he did what his teacher did.

At that time, the officials had many comments and criticisms.

He showed his agreement. However, he just remembered climbing up to shower the powders down

but neglecting the safety measures. At last, he accidentally fell down.

And one of his legs was broken.

This story tells us, sometimes we'll

do some superficial tasks to deal with political risks,

but we shouldn't just do so when it comes to construction.

Groundwork is necessary for safety risk.

The theme for this year is risk assessment, which is very academic,

as well as abstract. With years of experiences, many experts here

have worked for decades, and dealt with various difficulties.

Some may think doing superficial work is unnecessary because it'll be a waste of time.

It's more practical to start working right after they have arrived at the site.

It's more important to speed up. But there's an old saying:

"If you don't complete your homework today and settle the tuition fee, you have to pay more in the future". So in the following time,

we'll have a discussion with the industry experts on this topic.

This year, we'll still divide the forum into two sessions.

The first session is relatively macro and we will talk about definitions

and theories. It is also important to analyze risk assessment problems at a macro level.

In the second session, we will talk about the practical experience of several industries. But most importantly, our guest speakers, besides sharing your insights,

please try to spare some time to answer the questions from the audience. For the audience, please prepare the question slips and try to comment based on your own knowledge, experience or existing problems in the industry. The interaction between the guest speakers and the audience will bring more significance to this half-day event, which has been prepared diligently. Now, we'll start the discussion.

Firstly, we should make the definitions. I would like to ask the representative from the Labour Department.

In fact, a brief idea about risk assessment has been introduced.

Wait a moment, a guest speaker has just arrived.

Mr. Wong, please come onto the stage. The timing is just right, you are punctual. Mr. P WONG, please be seated.

Now, let's go back to the topic. Mr. Cheng, could you spend a few minutes to explain what risk assessment is about from your professional point of view? Besides theories, are there any practical rules or formats implemented?

Mr. Cheng: Thank you, Mr. Lee. Hi everyone. Mr. Lau from the Housing Department just explained it in detail. Risk assessment can be divided into 5 steps.

But maybe the information from Mr. Lau is too rich, you may not manage to memorize all of them. I will now repeat the 5 steps once again.

Indeed, risk assessment today is mainly about safety on construction sites.

How can risk assessment be well prepared to avoid accidents on construction sites?

Just like our subject today, to achieve the goal of Zero Incident.

For risk assessment, firstly, we should know what hazards are there.

As Mr. Lau mentioned, for example major incidents concerning falling from height and electric shocks are harmful.

The second step is to whom it is concerned, for example a lift project incident mainly involves the workers who install the lift.

The third step is to assess if the current safety measures are adequate.

From the mentioned incident, the previous safety measures were not enough so we need to strengthen them.

What is the fourth step? The fourth step is to keep record.

Why? As risk assessment should be done by the officers concerned, but practically, it may involve staff at many different levels.

With records, anyone concerned can share the outcome of risk assessment.

At last, I would like to draw your attention to timely review.

As you can see from the information shown about construction sites, the variation can be huge from day to day, or even from moment to moment.

Therefore, we should review at appropriate time, to review if the previous risk assessment results are still applicable,

which can actually summarize these 5 steps.

Mr. Lee: Honestly, I still think the 5 steps are relatively theoretic.

Can you tell us how can the industry be benefited after implementing risk assessment?

In addition, are there any penalties if we do not do it? It is a very practical issue.

Honestly speaking, it's the same issue no matter you conduct the risk assessment or not.

If we don't work on it, what will be the loss? Relatively,

we should ~~be~~ benefit if we do it. Indeed, the subject of today has already hit the nail on the head.

Risk assessment can reduce accidents

and decrease the chance to have accidents on construction sites. When we have this target, we hope to achieve the goal of Zero Incident today.

Why? As with this target,

we will carry out some safety measures,

no matter how big or small the scale of the works project is.

Large-scale works project definitely involve more kinds of risks and more workers, our concern is whether we have carried out adequate safety measures.

Some preliminary assessment work is definitely needed.

What should we do and how can we find out the risks?

Then set up appropriate safety procedures and methods

to achieve our goal. That is why

risk assessment is by far vital.

Mr. Lee: Simply speaking, the more sufficient and accurate our assessment is, the opportunities of incidents related to safety would be relatively lesser.

Mr. Cheng: Absolutely.

Mr. Lee: I would like to ask Mr. Fong from the Occupational Safety and Health Council.

Factually, all of us understand the basic knowledge, but practically,

from your recent years of experiences, especially for the construction industry,

I just found out that there are more new workers

joining the construction industry in these two years from several reports. Actually, how

does the construction industry

recognize and understand this risk assessment, and how is the implementation progress?

Mr. Fong: From our knowledge, some safety practitioners in the construction industry have mature concept and understanding about risk assessment.

They also know the main purposes of risk assessment

That is to have a better understanding of the undergoing and forthcoming procedures on construction sites.

Possible risks have to be identified. Then further assessment or consideration about whether the risks will harm the workers has to be planned.

The first consideration is whether there are methods to eliminate risks. If not, is it possible to use some administrative or engineering methods to reduce the risks to an acceptable or minimum level. so that workers can be protected by some safety measures. With no doubt, safety measures should be implemented practically but not superficially. Also, there are some special occasions, such as, changes of some procedures or construction methods, occurrence of some dangerous incidents and accidents. They are all wake-up calls for us to consider whether relevant risk assessment needs to be reviewed and revised.

Mr. Lee: Hong Kong is an international city. Everything is required to reach international standard.

Frankly, are there any international standards of risk assessment for Hong Kong to follow?

Mr. Fong: Yes, there are. In 2009, ISO launched ISO 31000, a risk management standard.

The standard aims to provide different industries and organizations of different scales with relevant knowledge to manage the risks which might occur in their operations.

BSEN 31010 is another standard which provides ISO 31000 with support, relevant guidelines, and risk assessment tools.

Most of the times, Hong Kong takes reference from the Standard 4360 from Australia and New Zealand.

These are the common standards for risk management.

Mr. Lee: I have heard several very important theories and principles.

Let us go back to how the industry can deal with them practically.

There are several representatives from the Construction Association on the stage.

I would like to ask Mr. Tong, the representative from the Construction Association first.

How does the industry deal with and manage risk assessment?

Mr. Tong: Actually, the risk assessment has been implemented in the construction industry for a long time.

Every contractor employs registered safety officers, so they are familiar with the procedures and theories of the risk assessment.

Now, the industry is facing three kinds of problems.

The first one is the change of processes and designs, which cannot be reflected in the risk assessment properly.

Tight work contract period is another problem. Sometimes changes are needed during the tight schedule,

so there is no spare time to assess risk.

If the problem of design change and tight work contract schedule come together, It will be more difficult to revise the risk assessment.

The third problem is also the crucial one and it is the method statement.

Generally, the method statements adopted by the industry have many rooms for improvement, as many of them are not designed with reference to '4M1E'(Man, Machine, Material, Method, Environment), every factor affect the risk assessment.

These are the three challenges being faced by our industry.

Mr. Lee: In short, some factors in method statement cannot be assessed accurately.

There can be urgent changes during pressing work contract deadlines.

Some details may be missed. This is the problem.

Now, we would like to ask Mr. Tang to share with us. Mr. Lai, please elaborate after that.

Mr. Tang: Thank you, Mr. Lee. I would like to share about the teamwork operation in a construction project.

Every part is very important, including engineers, on-site management, safety team, front-line management and front-line workers. They all link together tightly.

Indeed, everything we do, like what Mr. Tong mentioned,

Let it be the method statement or risk assessment,

everyone should participate and work together for the results.

As Mr. Lee mentioned, sometimes we will find risk assessment very abstract. We, the industry players, also find it relatively abstract and hard to handle.

Maybe each of us shares the same thought on certain circumstances.

Yet practically, risk assessment

is the tool we use, whether this tool

can only be truly implemented by the front line.

However, how to implement it by the front line, we need to rely

on the results generated by our risk assessment team, and bring the messages to the front-line management and workers.

I found that our greatest challenge is

how to deliver the messages to the front line.

This is my insight on the aspect of the risk assessment.

Mr. Lee: How can we thoroughly communicate and deliver the messages thoroughly?

After the completion of an assessment proposal,

how do we ensure the messages can be fully received and executed by front-line workers?

There are certain difficulties when handling both of them at the same time.

Mr. Lai, would you please share your experience?

Mr. Lai: We would like to start from what Mr. Tong mentioned - '4M1E',

and discuss them in these five directions. In fact, the main purpose of risk assessment is to protect people. This is definitely the core purpose.

But protecting people is the most difficult part

Because the thinking and behaviour of everyone is different. According to our company's information,

Over 80% of the accidents happened are related to the working behaviour of workers.

Therefore, the greatest challenge is about people.

As for machines, recently

a lot of large-scale construction works are in progress. Types of machines changed rapidly.

There are many new machines introduced to each works project.

For example, nowadays, quite a lot of trades have introduced crane lorries which can lift weights of 130 tons.

Actually I have not seen them before. However, when we have to do assessment, it is a bit difficult in terms of knowledge. Some details may be missed.

This is another challenge.

As for operation, there are many huge modular and prefabricated elements gradually developed. For example, nowadays, we need to lift a prefabricated ~~set of~~ bathroom with toilet to the working floor. This kind of modular and prefabricated element may weigh more than 10 tons.

How can we lift them from ground up a few dozen storeys to the working floor?

We need to think it over very carefully.

As for others, such as concerning methods, the industry nowadays is very flourishing.

The qualifications of subcontractors or site agents are not high enough.

Some of them might be new comers.

If they are required to provide some safe construction methods, they may not be able to manage them.

As for the environment, sometimes our construction works contracts are conducted in narrow spaces

or in residential area. I think the consideration of carrying out risk assessment is very vital.

As Mr. Tong just mentioned, works contract period is also a tremendous challenge.

Mr. Lee: Indeed, the practical difficulties mentioned by the three representatives from the Construction Association are so true.

I learnt from the experienced that machines must be new,

while workers should be old and well-experienced. The Housing Department's representative

and others have mentioned, there have been too many works projects in Hong Kong in recent years.

As many of the experienced workers have retired

or getting old and many new comers have just joined the industry. Succession gap has then occurred.

Later on, I hope all of you can express your opinions on how to deal with the succession gap and the flood of new comers, and other difficulties.

Now, shall we discuss the problem from another point of view?

There are friends from different industries here today.

I would like to direct my question to Mr. Lawrence Ng, President of Hong Kong Construction Sub-Contractors Association.

Mr. Lawrence Ng is very well-experienced and he has joined the forum for many years. Mr. Ng, please.

Mr. Ng: Thank you Mr. Lee. The people sitting next to me are real experts indeed.

We are not very professional in risk assessment but we have executed it in the industry for many years. I found that

we are familiar with the theories and sessions after so many years of execution.

The problem is not about hardware, but software, which is the attitude of people.

Now, we are facing two kinds of problems, formulation and execution.

As for formulation, according to contracts and the requirements of the management of construction sites,

generally, contractors are required to

do risk assessment and cooperate with method statement for specific works contracts.

But practically, I am not directing to any contractors

and I am not quoting the names here. From my knowledge, some contractors are very systematic and they perform well.

However, some others are working superficially.

Their risk assessment reports are very neat and rich in content with texts and pictures, which are perfect as a kind of homework.

However, the practicality and application are doubtful.

To be a good risk assessment,

I believe it should be a combination of several aspects. Besides

having theoretic guide from contractors, the expertise and experience in the industry are also very important.

As our guests just mentioned,

the participation of workers is also necessary. I think we should prepare a risk assessment which is easy to understand.

A perfect but complicated proposal

with doubtful feasibility in execution is not encouraged.

I think that is the problem of direction.

Secondly, nowadays, owners of large-scale works projects have already listed some requirements on the contract

that risk assessment is required on certain parts of the works contracts.

But we should not forget that there are still numbers of

small and medium-sized works contracts and contractors in Hong Kong. There are no specific requirements listed in the contract. With their enterprises' own resources problems, manpower and resources may not be enough for conducting risk assessment. The biggest difference between doing it or not is the increase of risk. This should not be considered just from the angle of the Housing Department. Indeed, our society should implement it as a whole, and with the participation of the whole construction industry in Hong Kong. This is a very important point.

Another point is about execution. As the guests just mentioned, it is a huge challenge to execute at the front line. Yet, this is related to and influenced by the setting of the risk assessment. If the front-line workers can participate at the very beginning, I believe the results can be better.

We are facing difficulties whether the front-line workers really execute the suggestions listed on the risk assessment report. Are the workers clearly aware of the hazards? I think that is what we should consider.

Mr. Ng helped express my feelings as a layman, when I first heard about the problem. Is it just paperwork? Is it well written but doubtful and infeasible? This is my query as a layman.

Mr. Wong, who just arrived on time. As the representative of front-line workers, would you like to share your feelings? How do you think of risk assessment?

Mr. Wong: Thank you, Mr. Lee. Many workers have shared that subcontractors or main contractors seldom seek advice from the front-line workers when they implement risk assessment; or their prior preparation is not sufficient.

As a result, workers seldom participate and do not understand the requirements in detail. In recent years, I have inspected construction sites with the Labour Department or the Occupational Safety and Health Council.

I have read contractors' risk assessment reports which are thick and presented beautifully. However the front-line workers do not really know what the actual requirements are. As we are not involved, this is relatively not ideal for the front-line workers.

Life belongs to themselves. It will be better if they can participate in the process and learn about the risks and hazards on the sites.

Mr. Lee: Based on the system and mechanism of companies, workers may not discuss the issue with you.

However, after the implementation of risk assessment, if workers have any queries. Would you please share your thoughts?

Are there any ways for communication? Can we actively fight for it?

Mr. Wong: I believe in this mechanism,
Communication is always good.

The mechanism allows workers to have a better understanding of the risks and hazards of the works.

Mr. Lee: Alright, would others, for instance the Labour Department or the contractors answer Mr. Wong's questions? I will invite two of the industry experts to share your experiences.

First, I would like to invite Mr. Chi Man WONG, the representative of The Hong Kong Federation of Electrical and Mechanical Contractors Limited.

Mr. Wong: Thank you, Mr. Lee. As for mechanical and electrical engineering, if there are many challenges for contractors, the challenges for mechanical and electrical engineering (E&M) are even more.

When E&M works starts, parts of the works projects have proceeded considerably. As a result, when formulating method statement or risk assessment, the schedule is even tighter.

In order to prepare a quality risk assessment, we need to spare more time on planning.

Indeed, the challenge we are facing is mainly about time, or quality, which is also hard to deal with.

Most of the time, after we

have finished the risk assessment report, the time for planning application method and delivering to the front line is very short.

We do not have enough time

to communicate with the front-line workers and explain the whole method statement.

This is the greatest challenge we are facing.

Mr. Lee: This is not an easy question.

We need to catch up with the schedule to complete the report and communicate.

After communication, workers need time to digest it to see if it is feasible. That is the problem.

Now, let us learn more about lift and escalator industry, a high risk industry.

Can we have Mr. Ho Yat Fan, Vice-President of Safety Subcommittee of The Lift & Escalator Contractors Association?

Please explain how the lift and escalator industry deals with the problems of risk assessment.

Mr. Ho: We are dealing with problems of the risk assessment.

Actually, before risk assessment is conducted,

we have another construction process. Who is normally responsible for establishing construction processes?

Generally, the engineers.

We need to find out control measures at every step.

That means what the hazard is and how to resolve it.

But if parts of the construction processes are not detailed enough, it is possible to have mistakes at that particular step. That is one of the problems.

Then, another issue is risk assessment.

For this,

after safety control proposals are confirmed, they are given to workers.

Workers may find the work processes complicated and complain that it is out of their scope.

This is a problem of recognition.

If workers treat safety processes as a part of their work, they will not ignore it. That is an aspect of education.

In lift and escalator industry, a working unit comprises 2 to 3 workers and with limited space to conduct the work.

We need to deal with different kinds of machines.

Therefore, we need to prepare different risk assessment proposals to suit different scenarios.

For example, we cannot control the provisions of a building.

Say for fireman's lifts, we will discuss and cooperate with the Incorporated Owners. It's a difficulty for us.

In recent years, the technicians in the lift and escalator industry are forties on average, which is a serious ageing problem. Youngsters seldom enter the industry.

We are facing a big problem.

Alright, before we start the second round of conversation,

you can first prepare your questions. I hope

you can spare more time to listen to others' opinions and raise questions for discussion.

I have just heard the issues from different roles and perspectives, so risk assessment is absolutely vital.

But when it comes to execution, there are many challenges.

I would like to ask the three contractor representatives first, because you are all experienced and well-rounded in the industry.

How to handle the mentioned problems and

are there any hidden facts and difficulties faced by the industry?

Mr. Tong, would you please start first?

Mr. Tong: For example, using more precast/prefabricated elements can reduce work processes hence the troubles involved are reduced.

As a result, the risk assessment time would also reduce.

BIM is the software for processes simulation,

which allows prior monitoring of processes in computers to assess risks.

It can increase the accuracy of the risk assessment. Previously, in most of the contractor's sites, there were risk assessment groups.

One of the main responsibilities of this group is to monitor the implementation of the risk assessment

and propose improvement. Usually, the site agents lead the group and the engineers, safety officers and subcontractors' representatives participate.

The group contributes a lot on the execution of the risk assessment.

The third aspect is workers. As the communication problem raised by Mr. Wong, after the completion of the risk assessment and control measures, how can the messages be delivered to workers?

At present, there are many platforms and channels for communication.

To name, we have morning safety assembly, tool box talks and training.

I would like to highlight the Risk Identification Activity after morning assembly.

These channels facilitate the delivery of messages to workers.

There are other two channels in our company

which include supervisors' treat of afternoon tea and safety monitor.

What is supervisors' treat of afternoon tea?

In each working area, the area supervisor is

the person in charge of the area. After the completion of the risk assessment,

The supervisor needs to be very clear of the risk assessment and inform the workers about the risks during afternoon tea time at 3:15pm.

Safety monitor is the representative of workers.

One of the workers will be the safety monitor in every trade.

This worker is responsible for monitoring other workers

and find out the unsafe issues. They need to check whether safety rules in risk assessment are conformed

and safety measures are implemented.

Messages such as proper use of personal protective equipment would be delivered by the safety monitor.

Mr. Lee: We understand that the guest speakers invited every year are the role models, who have better performance in various aspects in the industry.

I am aware there are many other construction companies in Hong Kong.

Are all of the companies well equipped with these factors and mature system?

I hope the audience can reflect the true picture, anonymously.

Then, I would like to ask the other two representatives from the Construction Association. As Mr. Ng and Mr. Wong just mentioned,

assessment might be carried out but execution might not be carried out by the front line, or even it is not understood or impractical.

How would you respond to this question and overcome the challenge?

Mr. Tang and Mr. Lai, which of you would like to share first?

Mr. Tang : As for risk assessment, it was mentioned by many speakers, The prevention of accidents or safety precautionary measures are divided into different levels from design to construction method and operation. Indeed, there are many ways to prevent accidents and ensure the safety in the front line.

As Mr. Tang said, the application of BIM or the incorporation of safety into design can prevent most of the risks existed in the front line.

Alright, for aspects of front-line workers, front-line management and execution methods, they can be explained by simple points or graphics.

This is definitely just an auxiliary format. In fact, working closely together for works contracts,

we need to develop a positive safety culture so as to implement every part of the safety measure.

In this connection, we have worked hard to facilitate and share the ideas to front-line workers with encouragement.

On this aspect, I believe the development will be getting better in the future.

Mr. Lee: Continuous education in different format is required to inculcate a culture.

Mr. Lai, how would you respond to the challenges of the industry?

Mr. Lai: As just mentioned, the safety of workers comes first.

How can we reduce the chance of injuries among workers?

After the completion of the risk assessment, and in between of it, our company has a comprehensive data base of safety information.

We have sorted and congregated the information of previous accidents or dangerous incidents together.

When we carry out similar work, we will extract the information of relevant accidents and figure out the human factors which have caused injuries of workers.

Indeed, we have massive ~~of~~ relevant information.

After extracting relevant information, we will strengthen the safety measures.

On the other hand, we will gather all workers before they start work.

If they have to perform high-risk duties, we will have specific training for them.

We would stress that accidents had occurred previously due to human factors.

This is practically relating to the works they are going to carry out.

For example, when accessing scaffolds without the use of ladders, some workers did fall from the height.

Would you like that to happen?

If they are aware of the relevant incidents in the past, they will have higher acceptance of risk control measure arrangements.

Therefore, we will emphasize this point.

In addition, BIM offers a great help.

Moreover, our company puts emphasis on development and usage of S3 Phones which connects front-line workers via smartphones applications. For example, workers find problems on certain areas when conducting safety inspection, safety inspector or staff will instantly inform the area management officers through smartphones to rectify the dangerous condition simultaneously. Furthermore, we can also check the training record of workers through smartphones or record the real-time training by smartphones application. The code of the risk assessment or method statement can also be found there. Consequently, supervisors do not need to bring massive information along, which can greatly reduce their burden. This also offers a lot of help in working and management.

Mr. Lee: Mr. Lai suggested a practical method of having instant communication through smartphones, which could be a very effective channel on construction sites.

All the three contractors have corresponding strategies. Besides the extraordinary performance of the three role models,

How about the condition in the industry? I am not sure about this.

Mr. Ng and Mr. Wong, what do you think? Are there any positive ways to achieve better risk assessment results?

Mr. Ng, please share your thoughts first.

Mr. Ng : Thank you Mr. Lee. These are actually old topics.

Safety is formed by human factors, but not documents, so the participation and proactive attitude of people are very important.

To conduct risk assessment, a full team is needed, which means to include professionals.

Professional team with knowledge can lead subcontractors and workers.

As front-line workers have practical experience

and they can tell the difficulties facing in the work processes or environment, and the possible risks. Their experiences offer practical contribution.

Therefore, when conducting risk assessment, talents from these three aspects should be included.

The second part is execution. Determination is also needed for execution.

Owing to the pressing work contract period and the increase of workers' income nowadays, sometimes they'll be less careful when they want to finish work quickly.

On this regard, there's a need to improve education

to let them understand no matter how tight the work contract period is,

safety always comes first. This should be executed together with the risk assessment and method statement,

we can't continue the work in unsafe environment.

The third problem is the changing circumstances. Risk assessment is formulated under perfect circumstances, but works projects are never perfect.

When working on construction sites in real life, we will find that the actual environment is far beyond ~~below~~ the assumption in the report. At that time, a proactive attitude is needed, and the proposals have to be adjusted. This is an unavoidable situation.

For example in lifting, can the four rigs be fully extended?

These are the difficulties commonly faced on construction sites.

Undoubtedly, our risk assessment is perfect.

But when there are problems on construction sites, firstly, no matter front-line management or workers, if they identify risks, they should stop working at once.

Inform the main contractor for consideration of a solution before restarting the work.

Don't try to be adventurous. It's not acceptable to complete the work quickly due to the tight schedule.

This is my humble opinion.

Mr. Lee: Mr. Wong, would you like to say something?

Mr. Wong : Besides a detailed method statement and the participation of front-line workers, several back-up proposals are necessary to reduce accidents. I think the most important factor is the participation of front-line workers. Then, they can be better protected as they are the executors.

Mr. Lee : They have rich practical experiences.

Now, let us listen to how Mr. Ho and Mr. Wong's response to the risk assessment from another perspective.

As just mentioned, there are many challenges and existing problems, how can we actively improve the current outcomes?

Mr. Ho, please.

Mr. Ho: To execute risk assessment, continuous preparation of reports is the common practice.

We used to prepare a thick document for submission, even though approved, it is difficult for workers to execute.

Or they do not understand how to do it.

However, the method is confirmed and has to be executed.

There was an accident. We needed to present the risk assessment report to the judge, The foreman said that workers had been trained and the report had been signed.

However, both the foreman and the workers stated that they did not understand the content of the document.

The workers were just instructed to sign on it.

This case pointed out that no matter how perfect the documents are,

the court commented that the accident would not happen if the documents were effective. That means documents are useless.

After that, I think risk assessment should include practical proposals contributed by three parties, workers, engineers, and safety officers.

They can come up with practical proposals which can be accepted by everyone.

After the completion of a risk assessment,

do workers complete their work with reference to the risk assessment reports?

Now, our policy is to conduct site inspection.

Management officers have to do on-site inspection and communicate with workers every month.

They have to understand whether workers are clear about the listed items in the risk assessment.

Workers are requested to answer correctly. Inspectors will do surprise inspection to ensure workers truly know and understand the content of the risk assessment.

Mr. Wong : I would like to say that in electrical and mechanical industry, workers need to lift heavy machinery such as fans and generators.

As lifting processes are complicated, the construction processes would be changed according to practical conditions.

Front-line workers may not understand and make proper adjustments.

I would like to share, in acceptable circumstances,

after the first step, such as lifting generators,

after the completion of lifting the first generator,

a debriefing should be conducted by all workers

to evaluate the work. The team including workers should evaluate on site immediately.

This evaluation does not involve any complaints or criticisms.

On the other hand, everyone shares the problems when lifting the first generator.

No matter the problems are positive or negative,

workers will share the problems with each other.

Through this practice, the progress of the second lifting will be carried out smoothly.

Some potential problems can also be solved.

I think you can make reference to this policy.

Mr. Lee : This is a very good experience sharing. Our industry players have shared their true feelings,

and the difficulties they are facing. Now, would the two representatives from the Labour Department

and Occupational Safety and Health Council give us further elaboration and suggestion for improvement.

What can be done to strengthen the work in the future? Mr. Cheng from the Labour Department, please share with us.

Mr. Cheng : Thank you, Mr. Lee.

I have listened to the sharing from friends of different industries.

No one denies the importance of risk assessment.

It is recognized as necessary, important and helpful.

Just that there are limitations on talents and time.

Undoubtedly, every method has its good and bad side.

I would like to say, everyone knows about the risk assessment and are familiar with it.

Please bear in mind that after conducting the risk assessment, it has to match the method statement.

When it comes to execution, whether the same results as expected can be achieved or not is most important.

For the officers preparing risk assessment reports, do they discharge their work upon the issue of the reports?

The answer is no. There should be somebody following up the results of risk assessment (which is supposed to be good) and implementing appropriate methods to check whether it can truly be executed.

Also, as mentioned,

the variation in construction sites could be very huge, there should be somebody responsible

to check whether previous measures are still applicable.

I think it is worth paying more attention.

Mr. Lee : I would like to ask Mr. Fong, after knowing so many difficulties and challenges. Are there any improvements to be made by Occupational Safety and Health Council?

Mr. Fong : We all agree that the current risk assessment in the construction industry has reached a reasonable standard.

Indeed, there's a lot of information available for the industry. For instance, the Labour Department,

government departments and related organisations like Construction Industry Council have made reference to many dangerous processes, published related guidelines,

codes of practice and work-related information for the industry.

The information is actually extremely useful

as it provides the industry with reference or standards about risk assessment.

However, we think the industry can perform better.

In view of the rapid changing technology, for example, the lifting machines can lift weight of more than hundred tons,

the knowledge of safety officers may not be comprehensive.

I have a suggestion to the industry in conducting risk assessment, it can be conducted by a team.

Besides safety officers, front-line workers or some professional engineers,

and other staff can participate together to produce a more comprehensive and ideal risk assessment.

On this aspect, OSHC have continuously released new courses and exchanged ideas with different parties.

We also regularly organize seminars and talks to provide reference for the industry.

In this way, we can satisfy the industry's demand for related knowledge.

Mr. Lee : Alright, I have many questions on hands that I may not be able to answer all of them.

I picked several questions. One of them is also my question.

After the full-day discussion on risk assessment, who should assess the suitability of the risk assessment? That is very important.

Who is the right person to assess the standard of the risk assessment? Who is authorized?

Is this question directed to the Labour Department?

Mr. Cheng : From the role of the Labour Department, we are definitely the main government organization to oversee safety on construction sites.

The Labour Department also arrange inspectors to conduct surprise inspection to inspect the safety on sites. When our colleagues inspecting the sites, they will check whether the safety measures on construction sites are enough.

When there are unsafe areas,

we need to know more about the causes, what are the reasons for the unsafe condition?

Actually, contractors will work on the risk assessment and method statement in advance,

When we trace the information, we will check the prior safety measures including the risk assessment and the method statement. Are they problematic?

Or are there problems in other aspects?

The Labour Department will trace how the problems of accidents have emerged.

From another point of view, the legal responsibility definitely falls on the contractors.

They've spent a lot of time to talk about

who should participate in the risk assessment.

It cannot be generalized. We should seek professionals

including safety officers who work on enterprises safety

and other relevant officers and those are familiar and experienced with the processes.

Contractors would

know who they need, who to do

and whom to seek help when in need. This is also important.

Mr. Lee : There is a similar question. Nowadays, contractors are experienced

to discuss from their experience. If every process in works projects

is carried out based on the risk assessment. According to your experience,

if there is an incident, who should be responsible for that?

If all colleagues work according to the risk assessment,

but incidents still happen, how shall we handle them?

Have you handled any similar happenings?

Mr. Tang : Maybe I can share my experience about it. Both risk assessment and method statement

include safety measures and the definition of who should be responsible for executing safety measures.

If accidents did happen, we will conduct investigation with reference to the procedures so as to identify the weaknesses.

From the case analysis mentioned by Mr. Lau,

It's possible that the risk assessment is inadequate, or its implementation doesn't reach the front line.

Analyses of incidents and accidents are required.

Mr Lee: Any guests would like to elaborate on that?

Mr. Lai : Most of the time, we don't know the actual conditions.

Therefore, risk assessment is generated by prediction by estimating where the risks are. As I just mentioned, our safety database is very crucial.

Even after assessment, accidents may still happen in many works projects

The assessment is not 100% perfect.

If accidents occur, it means hidden hazards still exist.

Therefore, the database is very vital for evaluation

and monitoring the comprehensiveness and how to develop improvements in the future.

Mr. Lee : Alright, the next question is raised by an audience who works in the lift and escalator industry.

Has risk assessment been promoted to each level?

For example, both the front line and engineers should acknowledge it.

Senior engineers, sales, sales managers should also understand it.

And why hasn't risk assessment been promoted as a part of works procedures?

It shall be treated as the factors like time and production cost.

Most importantly, we should not neglect safety problems due to pressing works contract period.

Who would like to answer this question?

Mr. Ho : Indeed, in my company, after we have completed a risk assessment,

Every executive committee member would keep a copy. Engineers, safety officers and regional foremen work together.

In other words, it is generated by three parties, engineers, safety officers and regional foremen.

Therefore, every worker is required to understand the content of the risk assessment,

informing changes and signing for confirmation.

As just mentioned, we have colleagues to conduct surprise inspection.

The colleagues will ask workers if they acknowledge the content of risk assessment.

Every condition will be explained in detail.

If they do not understand, the colleagues will explain the details again. That's how we work.

Mr. Lee : Alright, the last question is from a front-line worker.

Can the safety awareness of risk assessment be improved through the registration of workers' trades?

Can the method statement be generated from the bottom to top, in order to cooperate with the whole works environment?

Who would like to respond to this question?

Increasing the standard of registration, preparing method statement and seeking advice from workers, are the thought of front-line workers.

Can any of the contractors respond to it?

Mr. Lai : Actually, the system of the Housing Department is already well-developed in which silver card is required for certain trades.

Green card is the basic requirement for private projects.

However, as for Housing Department, we have more than 10 trades, such as installing lifts and tower cranes requiring workers to have silver card.

Communication from bottom to top, this is actually a very good idea.

As there are morning assemblies on every construction site, the supervisors conducts risk identification, workers can share their opinions with their supervisors regardless of their roles.

That's a possible arrangement.

Mr. Lee: This one-hour forum may not be able to cover all topics.

However I believe we have raised what we are concerned.

All in all, the one-hour forum is the result of collective wisdom.

I would like to quote from Mr. Lawrence Ng, for the assessment generated, safety is not merely words on the paper, rather, it is action.

It has to be written down and carried out. It is how words and actions co-exist.

Second, we have to be able to implement it as we acknowledge it.

Knowing without doing is useless.

Third, it is about the adoption of different working environments.

We need to communicate with people from all levels. We should be able to write, act, understand and implement what we think. Be flexible and communicative.

To deal with the fast-changing sites safety issues,

we have to implement risk assessment. To achieving Zero Incident, collective wisdom is needed.

Normally we have the afternoon tea at 3:15pm. It's a bit late today. It's now 3:40pm.
Not bad, we still dismiss on time.

Now, I will pass the time to our MC to talk about the refreshment arrangement.

Please give a round of applause to the guest speakers on the stage.

Thank you Mr. Lee and the guest speakers for the in depth analysis and sharing today.