

Next, the seminar is about to start.

We're very grateful to have invited numerous experts from the maintenance and improvement works, and property management sector.

Under the theme of "Learning from Safety Incidents, Routine Maintenance and Operation",

they will share their insights

As usual, any audience who has any questions on the discussion among the guests are welcome to ask our staff on the floor for the question paper to fill in and hand it to them.

We'll also have a Question and Answer session later.

Our guests will answer your questions.

May the following speakers please take your seat on the stage. They are

Mr. Ling Kin Chiu, Divisional Occupational Safety Officer of the Labour Department;

Dr. Wan Kin Man, Secretary of the Safety Committee, The Hong Kong Federation of Electrical and Mechanical Contractors Limited;

Mr. Lau Hin Tai, representative of the Hong Kong Construction Association;

Mr. Ip Chi Kwong, representative of the Hong Kong Construction Association;

Dr. Kao Sao Fu, Honorary Secretary of the Hong Kong Association of Property Services Agents;

Mr. Yeung Chiu Wing, Committee Member of the Hong Kong Chamber of Cleansing Contractors Ltd.;

Mr. Peter Pan, Chief Executive of Hong Kong Cleaning Association; and

Mr. Henry Cheung, Senior Consultant of Occupational Safety and Health Council.

Now may we again invite our facilitator Mr. Lee Kam Hung.

Mr. Lee, please.

Over to you, Mr. Lee.

In the first session, I began with a story.

In this session, we have elites from various industries to share their views with us.

In the first session, we have discussed a lot of concepts, the importance, challenges and difficulties of risk assessment.

In this session, I hope guests will share more on practical experience, including the lessons learnt so those industry players who are still here can leave for home-with useful information.

To set your mind at ease, I'll manage the time well,

I'll let you dismiss on time. No worry.

In this session, we have three important sectors, including maintenance, property management and security and cleaning

and so on.

Of course, we have colleagues from the Occupational Safety & Health Council (OSHC) and the Labour Department as well.

I would like to first ask the representative from the Labour Department how well does the Labour Department think the three unique sectors grasp the issue of risk assessment and if there are any areas worth drawing their attention to.

Mr. Ling please.

Mr. Ling : Thank you Mr. Lee. The Labour Department has set out related laws in this regard.

Pursuant to the general duty provisions of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance, Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, employers and proprietors are responsible for establishing a safe system of work for the dangerous procedures, activities and equipment in their work places.

Because of this objective, proprietors and employers are required to carry out “risk assessment” against certain dangerous matters, which is exactly the topic of today, and formulate safe method statements and risks control measures. Of course, they also need to provide the workers with related information, training and guidelines.

As the management personnel, they need to have an effective monitoring system to ensure the safe system of work which I just mentioned is being carried out effectively.

The Ordinances have already stated that the implementation needs to be effective.

I’ll ask about the details again. Mr. Cheung please.

Mr. Cheung basically is our guest every year and explains the basic theory every year. Do you have any new insights this year?

Regarding the topic of this year “Risk Assessment”, do you have any new ideas to share with us?

Thank you Mr. Lee. In fact from the experience of audits for Maintenance and Improvement Works Contracts of the Housing Authority and the experience of holding the Best Property Management Award Ceremony in Occupational Safety and Health each year, we know that organisations implementing Safety Management System and Safety Audit

are capable to carry out risk assessment.

For example the equipment used to reduce exposure to the risk of the fall of persons,

like the horizontal life line system mentioned by Mr. Wong Sai Yau

or the electric mobile elevated platform from the company of the Golden Awardee last year,

these are applicable for high-risk work and working at height.

Indeed it becomes more and more popular. Besides,

Tools used to assist in lifting up of the channel cover

or trolleys used to transport various materials in the clip

in fact show that an effective risk assessment can allow more resources to be invested in controlling the risks of occupational safety & health in the trade.

Mr. Lee : It's easier said than done, especially for those three trades.

Indeed many human factors are involved.

In the same clip, a young man is working as a property management officer.

His level of know-how and the knowledge in work are not deep enough, and

are not up to the level of professional engineer. When facing a group of colleagues in the basic rank of the trade,

I'll invite the representatives from cleaner and a security guard (the basic rank of the trade) accordingly,

if you want to tell them some abstract concepts,

you need certain skills.

We have the representatives from the Construction Association, Mr. Lau and Mr. Ip.

Mr. Lau and Mr. Ip please

Indeed contractors have shared a lot in the first session and

they actually have various difficulties,

such as certain changes and new comers joining in.

How do you understand the actual situation? Can Mr. Ip share first.

Mr. Ip : Thank you Mr. Lee. I think recently the industry has faced a big problem,

shortage of manpower. Of course, the speakers just mentioned

to gather all persons to discuss and formulate risk assessment when conducting the risk assessments.

Yet, I believe that under the current situation, workers at the front line,

Contractor's management staff or site management staff have heavy workload.

It seems to be rather hard to gather together and discuss risk assessment in terms of time.

Shortage of manpower will also entails another issue, i.e. lack of successors.

When gathering to discuss risk assessment, are our middle rank personnel or the contractor's management staff experienced and knowledgeable enough to give valuable opinions to perfect our risk assessment?

On this point I do have some reservation. Does Mr. Lau agree with me?

Mr. Lau : I totally agree. Indeed apart from the shortage of manpower, I'm engaged in construction repair and maintenance works and there are in fact some other issues.

For example, we need to carry out risk assessment once we receive the works order, but at most of the time, we have not received all the information about the works, for example the final design has not yet been finalized, or even the contractors have not yet decided which sub-contractor and workers shall be assigned to undertake the project. These will affect the accuracy of risk assessment.

The second perspective was mentioned by various industry players in the last session which is about construction variation issue.

Most of the time, variations are mainly found in modifying and changing the design.

Indeed besides the modifications of the design, we have to consider the climate in doing repair and maintenance work. Usually, for example, some works are scheduled to commence in winter and to be completed before the Chinese New Year. Yet due to some reasons, the work is postponed to summer.

The overall climate has changed.

It's hot in summer. We usually find it easy to get heat stroke. There are typhoons and rainstorms.

The overall risk assessment will also change. This is one of the reasons.

Third, risk assessment solely relies on the person carrying out-the assessment.

He might carry out the assessment based on his experience and subjectivity.

This is a difficulty.

Regarding the works, even if it is a simple task, it usually involves various

trades,
persons with various skills and various tools, thus it is hard to carry out the risk assessment.

Mr. Lee : You two have pointed out the difficulties honestly. Even though the Ordinances are well stated and the OSHC has done a lot on promoting safety, there are difficulties when putting them into practice. Overall speaking, climate (climate change), environment (actual working environment), labour (the successor of the trade) are three issues we need to deal with.

Several key members
and two Doctors attending the Site Safety Seminar each year. All questions will be answered by them.

We've Wan Kin Man and Kao Sao Fu here. When facing risk assessment, It's in fact an academic issue. May we ask these two Doctors on the series of practical issues we need to address. Can you give us some opinions?

Wan Kin Man please go first.

Mr. Wan : Regarding risk assessment, theoretically, in every 300 counts of near miss incidents,
29 counts will turn into accident indeed.

One count will become a serious accident, including death.

In fact, has timely review on the risk assessment been conducted after near miss incidents?

We usually carry out review upon the occurrence of accident or when there is a fatal incident.

Yet, will we conduct review on all 300 counts of near miss incidents?

This is crucial.

Indeed we should conduct review on the near miss incidents .

Besides, concerning how to promote the assessment to the frontline staff effectively,

I think it is essential to have a briefing before the works kick off.

That is because workers can be clearly told about the content of the risk assessment through the briefing

and the workers should be invited to evaluate if the control measures are applicable to be executed on the construction site.

There are a lot of changes and trades in the electrical and mechanical industry.

We usually do a review on the risk assessment report before working.

We will generally talk about the possible tasks, physical environmental factors,

division of labour , time and space. We'll

discuss all these matters. It is better than following the proposal approved

previously.

Carrying out review at the right moment is important, we should review among ourselves before working.

We have to put up an umbrella when raining and under the hot sun.

Carrying out an assessment before the work starts is simple and only takes a few minutes. That can reduce the exposure to risk already.

Mr. Lee : We should not carry out the evaluation until accidents happen.

As part of the procedure,

please spend a few minutes doing the review. Kao Sao Fu, pass to you.

Mr. Kao : Some guests have shared a lot on risk assessment.

I would like to talk about the problems occurred when putting risk assessment into practice.

Let's take repairing the electrical appliance in the shopping mall as an example. The proper procedure is to have the power off first.

The risk assessment under such circumstances is to have the power off.

However quite a number of incidents may happen in between.

The shop owners and tenants object to the power off. Shop owners cannot run the business.

Those engaged in fish cultivation may say they need the water pump to cultivate fish. Fish will die if there is no fresh water.

Or some other issues may appear.

Therefore our risk assessment is not only done once and for all.

We have to take the actual circumstances and the problems we might encounter into consideration,

just like what I have mentioned. The frontline staff should negotiate with not only the company,

but also the tenants and residents, and then see what kind of compromises can be made among themselves.

This can guarantee one's work safety. This is the point I wish to make for actual implementation.

Mr. Lee : I might also raise one more example in the course of work execution. If the power off is the safest,

this will cause disturbance. The air-conditioners have to be turned off and so does the water pump.

That might affect many seafood restaurants, say the live lobsters may all die.

There may be danger if there is no power off. Dr. Kao, please help address how to persuade them to let you have the power off to carry out repair work.

Mr. Kao : This might not only happen then. Indeed we can discuss with tenants earlier when carrying out risk assessment to examine their needs separately.

Or how long the tenants can allow us to have the power off.

We can just work at night if we cannot work in the morning or afternoon or to reschedule a time to work.

Of course we have to look at the urgency of the process. If that is an urgent case, we have to work without other alternative.

Yet we should try our best to convince the tenants.

At least we let them know the risks of them and our workers.

Or there are some risks that the safety officer may consider acceptable.

Mr. Lee : Under such circumstances, risk assessment is not only a matter concerning the own risks of the worker involved. We have to take into account the overall risk assessment if certain items change.

We should never work alone.

Just like what you have just mentioned, we have to persuade, schedule for a time frame and come up with the time which causes least impact to each other before letting the frontline staff do that.

Today we are pleased to invite two representatives from the cleaning organisations, Mr. Yeung and Mr. Pan.

Please share with us how you tackle this difficult issue, especially for the frontline staff, who

do not understand what you say, how would you do?

Mr. Pan : Thank you Mr. Lee. Risk assessment- in reality, we have to tackle from three key aspects, the employer, risk assessment professional organizations

and the frontline staff. We mainly tell our frontline staff

that all the risk assessments we carry out concern the safety of their lives.

to let them have an in-depth understanding and be more engaged in and aware of risk assessment,

to let them know we value their lives,

facilitating all organisations to conduct the risk assessment smoothly.

For example the confined spaces and the water tank matters, these are all under the category of confined spaces.

We should have the professional organisations to carry out the test on the air ventilation

and if there's sufficient oxygen content in the air.

Only when the competent person has signed the permit can the certified workers enter and start working.

Mr. Lee : In fact, the cleaning workers are not engineers who earn high salary every month,

they might consider the risk assessment is too complicated and neglect it

with the only aim to complete the works a.s.a.p. Mr. Pan, how would you deal with such workers?

Mr. Pan: We would tell them life is once and for all and there is no second chance.

You do not wish to hurt yourself and die. Your relatives and colleagues will worry about you and you will also suffer from the torture.

We do not wish to see those accidents happen.

Mr. Lee: To set one's mind at ease, you do not do that to satisfy the company

but to safeguard yourself.

Mr. Lee: Mr. Yeung, please share your experience with us.

Mr. Yeung : On the part of workers towards risk assessment, most of our workers are not well-educated.

A majority of them do not know about risk assessment. It is futile in explaining risk assessment to them.

They work in their own way when we tell our lines. To actually let them understand that in depth

depends on our extra care from the management. After talking to them, completing the risk assessment

and telling all workers once, we will focus on high-risk tasks, for example the workers working on the canopy, we will conduct site visit and

ask them clearly if we can do anything to facilitate their work

and to assist them, what equipment we can provide to them and care more about them.

We may also pay surprise visit to them on site,

to let them know the management do value them.

Therefore they'll work harder. If they perform well, we'll award them and they will be pleased and work more enthusiastically.

Mr. Lee : Sometimes we have both the carrots and sticks on hands.

Regarding these three trades,

They're handled by rather junior workers.

Of course they might not be good at absorbing information from various aspects.

Mr. Cheung, when facing the frontline workers, regarding the need for risk assessment

and execution as well as a implementation,

do you have any interesting ways to teach us?

Mr. Cheung : Well, indeed, we should know all workers should be involved in risk assessment.

There's not only one type of risk assessment.

It should have various functions on various stages of the construction.

Only through that can a safe working system be created,
For example, what we have just mentioned is mainly about the risk assessment at the early planning stage. We have to match the construction methods to identify, analyse and assess the risks in order to do it well. When we find that existing measures are inadequate, we might propose additional risk control measures.

The remaining risks can be reduced to an acceptable and tolerable level. But please bear in mind there is another type of risk assessment, which was mentioned by the Gold Awardee just now—"Job Hazard Analysis".

This is to analyse each procedure of the works and how to eliminate risks in order to formulate the construction methods, operation procedures and working guidelines.

Risk assessment report itself cannot be used for work execution. We must come up with the construction methods.

Another type which involves the frontline staff is the hazard identification activity before work commencement every day. That allows the workers to identify, assess and control.

With the Pointing and Calling confirmation skills, we can be certain about the working risks on that day.

As for the supervisors on site, they also play an important role.

Previously, some speakers have mentioned if he can carry out another on-site real-time risk assessment according to the conditions of the workers, the mechanical equipment, materials and the environment that day.

Just like Mr. Wong Sai Yau has mentioned, if the angle bracket should be installed vertically,

yet the situation does not allow so, can it be fixed horizontally?

We may see if his construction method is applicable or we can modify a bit to make it adoptable?

Or one knows that the work is actually related to mechanical principles but not as simple as a matter of three screws.

So, he should be capable of deciding if the work should be stopped, to report to the higher ranking staff and to seek advice.

In fact, on risk assessment, apart from the planning assessment which is more mature in nature,

we should also make more effort on the recognition and implementation of other risk assessment.

That involves communication, evaluation and more engagement of workers.

Mr. Lee : These issues actually involve two issues.

First, workers' ability to understand. They might not necessarily understand when you tell them;

Second, actual monitoring if risk assessment is really being carried out.

I am wondering if the Labour Department can give us some opinions in this regard.

For instance, if the worker is weak in understanding the messages, the supervision of implementation of the laws might not be effective or there is not any good method.

Mr. Ling : Thank you Mr. Lee. Workers' ability to understand depends on their level of understanding of risk assessment.

In fact, frontline staff will be more aware of this issue provided that they are given the information and are trained properly.

Of course we also suggest the employer to invite more engagement of the employees when carrying out risk assessment.

This is because their participation, no matter big or small, will be a great help to the results of risk assessment.

The reason is that either the workers or the frontline staff will somehow know certain possible risks in their usual working environment.

That is why their involvement will give rise to a more comprehensive outcome of the risk assessment.

Mr. Lee: How to do the best in the process to engage the workers?

May we invite the two representatives from the Construction Association, Mr. Ip and Mr. Lau, over to you.

How to communicate effectively between the junior staff and the senior staff and make sure they have a good understanding, as well as making them realise the importance of risk assessment.

Mr. Lau : In my opinion, we should first and foremost change the workers' working culture. From my observation, many workers regard risk assessment

as a piece of homework to be submitted to the owner or architect by the main contractor, and for the purpose of processing pay for safety, that is nothing to do with them.

His work should not be about reading hundreds of thousands pieces of documents.

Workers usually have this mentality. We, as the contractor, should clearly tell the workers and sub-contractors that risk assessment concerns one's life.

Not only that, risk assessment concerns the lives of his mates, residents and other persons.

This is the first important point.

Secondly, it is about how to make the workers know the content of risk assessment.

It is essential that the related persons, the site agents or the safety officers, should go to the construction site in person upon completion of risk assessment and explain to the workers the content of risk assessment in details.

Those workers will never read such a huge amount of documents.

Plus, demonstrations may sometimes be needed.

For example, as mentioned by Mr. Wong, when the water tanks are being cleaned, many tools are involved. Will the workers understand when they are told to read the risk assessment?

We might really need to demonstrate once on how to place the tripod and what equipment is needed to be prepared at work.

Demonstrate once to them before working.

Risk assessment in itself, the finalised version must be posted up on the construction site.

Besides, the risk assessment draft should be presented in the way that everyone understands.

That is not only about the difference between Chinese and English.

For example if the workers are all Chinese, it is the best to present in Chinese.

Yet, if there are a few ethnic minority workers, both Chinese and English versions may be needed.

We even have to make it easy to understand. That is not only a matter of presenting the risk assessment in Chinese and English but also the use of language, which is also important.

Sometimes the safety officer thinks that they have to hand in the risk assessment in a presentable manner.

They used some difficult terms to express the meaning.

It is suggested to put down 'gas welding' directly instead of "oxy-acetylene flame".

The technical terms should be in line with those jargons used in the industry when presenting risk assessment so that workers can and may have a higher possibility of understanding the content when reading.

You should know that when the workers do not understand, they might find that it is unrelated to them and it is none of their business. They will just ignore that. These are some of my insights.

Mr.Lee : It is important not to treat the risk assessment as homework.

It is not yet complete after submission. Mr. Ip, do you have anything to share?

Mr. Ip: Mr. Lau has made some great points.

We bear an important responsibility to tell the content of risk assessment to the workers. We should never ignore the supervisors at the frontline. They are also important. Sometimes we come to the construction site and ask the supervisors.

Basically they know nothing about the content of risk assessment but it is essential that they need to know the content.

That is because they take up the role of supervisor and an immediate educator.

When they find the workers make a mistake, they should know that.

Risk assessment requires them to know what they should do to correct the workers

and to let the workers work safely in order to reduce the occurrence of accidents.

Mr. Lee : If the supervisors do not understand, that is a serious issue. They are the key persons.

Mr. Ip: I think they should know. Sometimes this group of persons are ignored in our education.

We tell the workers directly about the risk assessment but overlook the site agents and supervisors at the front line on the construction sites.

Sometimes when they walk pass and find the workers are in danger, they do not know their responsibility and procedures under the risk assessment.

I think that is a regret.

Mr. Lee : Well, I have sought advice from Mr. Wan and Mr. Ko on those several issues mentioned such as workers' ability to understand, effective communication and if pictures and words are enough, how to make sure each team member receive such message and carry out their work safely.

May we invite you two to illustrate. Shall Mr. Wan go first?

Mr. Wan : I discussed with some industry players in Guangzhou and they mentioned "one position with double responsibilities". That is someone in certain position should bear two responsibilities.

Apart from his own post, safety is also his responsibility.

This means safety should always be a part of the job.

One should always conduct assessment and think of what should be paid attention to before work commencement.

In addition, although we think risk assessment and safety are crucial, is health neglected?

If we take the factor of health into account when doing assessment, you will find that this shows great care to staff.

For instance, they need to drink more water under scorching sunlight.

This is a caring act. Risk assessment usually focuses on safety, such as whether you are injured, but health is being neglected.

Moreover, we often say there are a lot of words in risk assessment.

Like what Mr. Lau said, could we use more graphics?

It was mentioned in the last session of the seminar that

our BIM, i.e. Building Information Modelling,

can be used not only at the construction period

but also the operation and maintenance stages.

In fact, the model already exists. We can make use of the model in operation and maintenance stages

to allow staff to understand the dangers on sites

and anything worth attention. It can even be used for assessment.

In this way, let the staff understand with aid of technology, not just by lecturing.

At construction sites, we can use computers to simulate their work environment

to show potential risks and applicable measures. This can help.

Mr. Lee : What Mr. Wan said is very important. Sometimes we explain and clarify the assessment regulations and rules to staff.

We have to do it with humanity. With humanity, it's not the case that

I tell you to handle it;

but actually I tell you that I am concerned about your safety.

You have to pay attention to that in your interpretation.

Mr. Ko should be very experienced in this area. How do we achieve effective communication?

Mr. Kao : Dr. Wan has mentioned it and I would like to add a few points.

Let's say the education level of frontline staff is lower

and there is a gap when compared with that of the colleagues responsible for conducting risk assessment.

For example, when we have bought a new electrical appliance, we may still be confused

after reading the manual.

This is because the writer of the manual is already very familiar with the electrical appliance, but the new owners may still not be able to get the hang of it after reading it several times.

The same applies to the frontline staff and supervisors who receive the risk assessment report we conduct.

They may only understand a little of it.

In this case, I think it is best for safety officers or safety supervisors to spend some time to supervise in person during the first time of implementation.

If they spot anything wrong, they can point out the mistakes directly.

Or if the frontline staff seem to be confused, safety officers or supervisors can at least explain and point out their mistakes.

I think we have to be more humanised on this matter.

Sometimes we can give them a pat on the shoulder instead of pulling a long face.

A long face will not do any good and it may even cause hard feelings.

So I think Dr. Wan has a point.

Mr. Lee: Explanation has to be humanised and simple, and at the same time it should make them alert. Mr. Pan has something to say. Mr. Pan, please.

Mr. Pan : The two doctors have made really good points. Today I want to talk about

using risk assessment as our means to achieve safe production.

If we have to assess a confined space, we can discuss it from five aspects.

The first is oxygen depletion. The second is measuring poisonous gas. The third is the entry of unknown objects.

The fourth is the possibility of a fire or explosion. The fifth is the sudden starting of manual machines.

We will tell our staff in an in-depth yet simple way that these five areas may endanger their lives

and later on they will be very careful when working.

A safe working environment is provided by employers, but we should take the initiative to work safely.

This is more important than a safe working environment.

Sometimes our behaviour can help us overcome a harsh environment.

That is right.

We cannot change the environment. But we can change.
With the help of awareness and behaviour, we can overcome it.
Does Mr. Yeung have anything to share?

Mr. Yeung : Our cleaning staffs had also worked for the previous employer and they have been working in this post for over 10 years.
We understand that it was all about speed in the past and there was a lack in the knowledge of safety.
When we were conducting risk assessment for them,
We assigned safety officers to discuss with them in person and changed their work culture.
Since the introduction of risk assessment, the culture of many staff members was gradually changed.
In the past, to sweep the slope, the staff would get on the slope directly.
But now we provide safety facilities, such as safety harnesses and fall arrest system, etc
A lot of staff members have already learnt how to use them, thanks to the first-hand experience with them on the sites.

Mr. Lee : Alright. After two sessions of discussion,
You've had a basic grasp of the present situation.
In the remaining bit of time, I hope our friends here
can express their particular views or make a conclusion on today's topic since it's rare that we have so many people concentrating on acquiring knowledge.
Now each of you can speak for one minute.
Let's start our conclusion with Mr. Ling from the Labour Department and end it with Mr. Cheung.

Mr. Ling : Thank you, our moderator. In fact, carrying out risk assessment is not difficult.
The key to the success of risk assessment is whether review is conducted.
As review can make modifications according to the changes in the environment,
it allows the precautionary measures in the risk assessment report to be able to
control your job hazards effectively. I think this is of utmost importance.

Mr. Wan : In the past, we tended to overestimate our ability,
overestimate our ability to control risks,
overestimate our knowledge and underestimate the risks.
I think I would rather overestimate the risks than overestimate our ability,
underestimate the risks. This is the first point.

The second point is our mechanical and electrical industry is often responsible for downstream work processes.

We ought to start thinking about the maintenance and operation risks at the design stage.

If we have already thought of effective control measures to reduce and eliminate some risks during design, it will be more effective than simply using safety measures at the start of work.

The third point, like what I said earlier, is to consider not only safety but also health when doing risk assessment. This can show care to staff and retain them.

The last point I want to raise is

Pointing and Calling is to enhance our alertness and the accuracy of actions.

This helps to identify high-risk procedures when conducting risk assessment.

We can also make use of this method to increase our vigilance and accuracy

and to let people know some key procedures have already been done, including checking of the inspection mode switch when doing lift maintenance.

Is it turned off? Is it locked?

You can say it out loud to make things clear for yourself and your co-workers.

You can all take note of these four points.

Mr. Lee : After Mr. Lau is Mr. Ip.

Mr. Lau : Many people talked about risk assessment today.

The focus was always on the identification and assessment of risks and the formulation of some measures to reduce risks and make remaining risk acceptable.

Then the works can begin.

I reckon risk assessment still has one more function.

Carrying out risk assessment before the commencement of construction works

allows us to see if the risk is high.

We can see if there are other ways to avoid the risks.

If there are no risks, then there is no need for assessment.

For example, very often in our maintenance works

We will build some mild steel railings along the edges of rooftops or water tanks.

After doing risk assessment,

we found that many procedures which require working at height are quite

dangerous.

There are some ways to reduce those risks. Before the start of the work, alter the designs in order to lower the risks.

For instance, is it better to use stainless steel instead of mild steel for making railings?

Stainless steel does not have to go through the procedure of painting, which means there will be one less procedure and one less risk. It spares us the risk of painting at height.

Stainless steel is durable and this decreases the frequency of repair and maintenance.

Also, there is no need to paint frequently.

Besides reducing risks, controlling risks

and ensuring the safe execution of construction works, risk assessment can help before the commencement of works,

we can come up with some designs

or alter some designs at the design stage to enable the works to be carried out safely.

We can even reduce the risks during the subsequent repair and maintenance. These are my opinions.

Mr. Lee : Okay. Mr. Ip, please.

Mr. Ip : To me, risk assessment is to assess the risks of someone.

Like what our moderator, Mr. Li, said, this is a very academic and abstract topic.

How does a third party assess the risk of a person who faces risks?

Let's think about this. A worker is working at height.

Does he know the risks involved?

Does he know the risks of working in a confined space?

Why does he do it even if there are risks?

I will leave these for you to think about.

A lot of distinguished speakers and our friends here mentioned education just now.

I think if we solely rely on contractors to be responsible for education, the result will not be satisfactory.

For example, it will be better for the Labour Department to be responsible for education through other areas.

Say, the Green Card. New workers have to acquire the Green Card.

When he has to renew the Green Card after 3 years,

He will be taking the same course he did 3 years ago.

3 more years later, he will be reviewing the same course he did 6 years ago.

How are our workers supposed to increase their safety knowledge?

Concerning this, can we consider adding some new elements every 3 years,
and adding some new elements every 6 years?
After 9 years, that worker may have already become a boss or a foreman.
He may be leading a group of workers.
When he renews his Green Card, there should be certain new elements for this group of workers with 9 years of experiences, such as how to manage new workers and what my responsibilities are. When they are promoted to higher ranks,
their Green Card course should also continue to be updated. This is my question.

Mr. Lee: Great. Dr. Kao, please.

Mr. Kao : I want to make one point. I think the risk assessment of each procedure cannot be completed by just doing it one time. After conducting risk assessment for once, other problems will be found during the actual work.
Safety officers or safety supervisors should be aware of any other problems which arise when implementing the procedures after the completion of risk assessment.
Should any problems arise, there may be a better way to complete the same procedure when doing the risk assessment for the second time so as to get the job done in a better and safer way.
There is always room for improvement.
There is room for improvement for every kind of risk assessment.
I hope you will give heed to this to make each procedure safer.

Mr Lee: Okay. Mr. Yeung and Mr. Pan, please.

Mr. Yeung : For cleaning, the Housing Department is becoming stricter when it comes to safety.
We are required to have one safety officer and write safety reports.
After having these requirements,
the safety of our workers is much improved.
In the past, when a worker found any problems,
he would not report to the foreman and he would solve them by himself.
After having this communication channel,
we can write reports to the Housing Department directly.
For example, we had to use ladder to get up to the canopies of some

buildings.

We noticed that we can get to the canopy from the door in the lobby.

We submitted a report to them and then they really opened the door and also provided

stairs and handrails. As long as we have fastened the safety harnesses properly when getting down to the canopies,

It is virtually risk-free.

Ever since we have had risk assessment, communicating with the authority becomes simple.

Mr. Pan : I think everyone has done their risk assessment as good as Hong Yip

and the company has a very nice occupational safety and health (OSH) culture.

This is a long-term matter and it is not over yet even after the assessment is completed.

It is a cultural promotion.

Hong Kong Cleaning Association and the Occupational Safety & Health Council

will publish an OSH booklet for Hong Kong's cleaning industry.

It is about to be published and we hope you will find it helpful.

Mr. Lee : Now Mr. Cheung will make a conclusion.

Mr. Cheung : The Occupational Safety & Health Council will continue to improve the industry's understanding of risk assessment.

For instance, we offer different types of courses,

such as the courses mentioned by Dr. Wan like the Pointing and Calling course, Hazard Identification Activity course and so on.

They allow different ranks of staff in the industry

to learn about relevant concepts, procedures and skills comprehensively.

Furthermore, learning does not have to be confined in a classroom.

So each year we organize the Construction Safety Promotional Campaign

and give away the Best Property Management Award in Occupational Safety & Health.

This will provide the industry with a chance to exchange ideas and learn from each other.

On August 27, the Gold Award winner of this year's Best Method Statement

will share about how to combine the best method statement, risk assessment and construction method

at a seminar in a community hall in Kwun Tong.

I hope you will be there.

Mr. Lee: Remember the date. Next is a Q&A session.

As time is running out, I will pick one or two questions that are more meaningful and important.

This question is very practical. I think either the Labour Department or contractors can answer it.

With the increasing standards of Hong Kong's local workers, is it possible to let them be the driving force of the OSH culture?

Workers will do a self-assessment before the start of work. In a bottom-up approach.

Then it will be passed to the relevant officer to discuss and decide how to promote.

This will be better than having staff writing reports in office for them.

Does this bottom-up approach work? Who wants to respond?

Mr. Lau: Doing risk assessment in a bottom-up way is necessary.

Conducting risk assessment should never only involve safety officers or project managers reading floor plans and documents in a meeting room.

They have to discuss with workers and subcontractors and even have an on-site observation with them before writing the report.

Actually it doesn't have to be bottom-up.

We should strike a balance and let everyone take part, rather than adopting a bottom-up or top-down approach.

This is because workers take the workflow of actual operation into consideration when doing risk assessment.

But for engineers, project managers or safety officers, they have to consider other factors and identify hazards during risk assessment.

Even if the construction works are simple, different trades of workers and tools will be involved.

We may not be able to invite all the workers.

So sometimes only experienced project managers or foremen will be able to identify certain risks and requirements in risk assessment.

I think risk assessment shouldn't be top-down or bottom-up.

It should be done together by workers, frontline supervisors, safety officers and project managers.

Mr. Ip : I very much agree to what Mr. Lau said.

I suppose it is not top-down or bottom-up, but a closed-loop. Communication should be carried out continuously.

As contractors, we play a dominant role,
and we will use the comments raised by workers
for reference when conducting risk assessment.
It is because workers may overlook requirements of the law and of
employers,
we contractors will consider every factor
and prepare a proper risk assessment report.

Mr. Lee : The following question was asked by several audience members.
The Labour Department should reply.
They asked that a lot of safety ordinances regarding labour have been
raised.
But some are not yet legislated and there's no time-table for legislation.
In relation to today's topic of risk assessment, can we use legislative
processes and law enforcement as a deterrent to help implementation of
risk assessment?

Mr. Ling : Thank you, moderator. Like what I have said
as explained in the general duties of employers, employers should provide
a safe system of work.
Because of the need to provide a safe system of work,
employers must conduct risk assessment.
Risk assessment is a tool. Employers can use this tool
to find out the dangers of an employee's work or a device
so as to lay down some safe method statements or risk control measures.
In this way, we can eliminate the hazards of work or devices.
What I just said is included in the general duties provisions of the
Factories and industrial Undertakings Ordinance.
There are some special regulations, such as for the confined space.
The regulation of confined space specifies that employers have to do risk
assessment.
They have also stated what the penalties are
if risk assessment is not carried out. They are very clear.
Moreover, take the Noise Ordinance as an example. It explicitly describes
that employers have to conduct assessment. That assessment is of course
done because of noise.
It also clearly states that any violation will result in corresponding
penalties.
You have to know that it is impossible for every trade to have its
regulation,
so other trades will be subject to
the general duties provisions of the two major ordinances just mentioned.

Mr. Lee : All included. Alright, time is almost up.

We have to finish on time.

We have had an in-depth discussion on some issues.

I will conclude it with three main points.

First, risk assessment requires a humanised interpretation and presentation in order to achieve mutual understanding.

Communication is not top-down or bottom-up, but in a closed-loop. Closed-loop communication is to have every participant

take part in the whole process of risk assessment.

The third point is to try not to have any risks that is the best way of doing risk assessment.

This is our higher target.

Thank you for your patience and attention.

I hope you will bring back the experience and knowledge you have gained today to your work environment and promote this good awareness based on your case.

In the remaining time, today's MC will guide you on the procedures of how to leave in a peaceful manner.

I would like to thank all the guests on the stage. A round of applause, please. Thank you everyone.

MC : I want to thank our guests. I also would like to thank Mr. Lee Kam Hung.

Today's seminar is drawing to a close.

On behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority and the Occupational Safety & Health Council,

I want to express our gratitude to the tremendous support of all the organisations and participants.

After today's exchange, I hope you will remember this.

"Risk Assessment is the Key to Site Safety".

Please implement the various site safety measures properly so as to achieve the ultimate goal of "Zero-incident, Safe Construction Works".