

Opening Speeches

MC: Now, let's invite Mr. Stanley YING Yiu-Hong,
Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)
to give us an opening speech.

Mr. WONG Tin-Cheung, representatives from all the supporting organisations, friends from the industry, and ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for joining today's Site Safety Forum for Works Contracts and Property Services Contract.

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) is committed to providing quality homes for low-income families. Through continuous improvement in building quality and estate management, we've created a comfortable home where public housing residents can live harmoniously. As a caring organisation, HA has all along been fostering a safety culture in all areas of its work to provide a safe and healthy workplace for our frontline workers to facilitate the construction of quality housing and provision of effective management services. To successfully accomplish our mission, it's crucial that we provide our staff with care and in turn gain their commitment and support.

We've the responsibility to ensure the work safety of our staff and spare no effort in maintaining the accident rate down to less than 12 accidents per 1 000 workers. Through our continuous efforts over the years, we've achieved a high standard of safety performance on all construction sites under the HA. In 2013, the accident rates on the HA's sites were 7.3 accidents and 4.1 accidents per 1 000 workers for new works and maintenance works respectively. They were below the overall accident rate of 40.8 accidents per 1 000 workers for the whole construction industry.

Bearing in mind the motto "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure", we are adamant in taking pre-emptive measures, in particular risk management, to ensure site safety. Just like the theme of the Forum this year "Risk Assessment is the Key to Site Safety", we've adopted various risk management measures in different aspects, including procurement strategy, contract management and rigorous monitoring to effectively strengthen site safety standards. Besides, we've been sensitive to the development trend in the industry, and have continuously been exploring and introducing new technologies for upgrading the safety performance in workplace. For example, in 2014-15, we plan to apply the Building Information Modelling in the design stage of all new projects to further improve

the construction processes and minimise the risks of accidents. Also, proactive efforts have been made in the development of purpose-designed smartphone application to help strengthen the safety management and control of building quality on construction sites.

We'll continue to proactively promote the highest safety and health standards on works sites even in face of the pressure from the large housing production. Embracing the four core values of "Caring, Customer-focused, Creative and Committed", we'll staunchly forge ahead to enhance the work quality and standards of site safety despite the need to expedite construction programmes, and promote the best practices with the help of advanced and innovative work processes, technologies and machinery. While working to shorten the construction periods, we'll strive for upgrading the overall quality of construction management at the same time to ensure that all the work processes are safe and of good quality. On housing production and estate management, we'll continue to enhance the procurement strategy and monitoring mechanisms, strengthen contract requirements and management, and encourage researches, training and the promotion of safety awareness on works sites.

The HA and the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) have once again joined hands to organise today's Forum, and outstanding practitioners in the industry are invited to share their experiences and views on the best practices. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the OSHC, the supporting organisations, the speakers and the participants from the industry for their tremendous support in all these years enabling us to hold this Forum for eight consecutive years.

We're confident that with the managers and frontline staff working as one and by staying tuned to the latest development in the industry, we can improve the occupational safety and health standards in the working environment and achieve continued improvements in building quality, repair and maintenance, as well as management in public housing estates. I act with a caring heart.

Thank you!

Thank you Mr. Ying. Please be seated.

Next, let's invite Mr. Conrad WONG Tin-Cheung, Chairman of Occupational Safety and Health Council to say a few words to us. Mr. Wong please.

Permanent Secretary Mr. Ying, fellow guests, friends and colleagues, hello.

Just now, Mr. Ying has mentioned the Occupational Safety and Health Council has worked with the Housing Authority and organized the forum for 8 consecutive years.

In fact, the Chief Executive has announced in the Policy Address to increase the housing supply by 470000 units in the coming 10 years, in which 60% of them will be public housing units.

In addition, the aged housing estates will be redeveloped. Housing Authority is thus shouldering heavy responsibilities.

This is the golden period of infrastructural projects and new works contracts.

There is a significant increase for public housing development, causing a shortage of labour and new workers, bringing a huge challenge on occupational safety and health, or OSH.

A number of fatal industrial accidents have been recorded since the first quarter this year, mainly involving working at height and lifting operations.

To enhance site safety and safeguard the OSH of our construction workers, we must work closely together in the quest.

As the largest housing developer in Hong Kong, the Housing Authority has put in tremendous resources to upgrade the site safety standards for safeguarding all the workers on works sites over the years.

The Independent Safety Audit Scheme launched by the OSHC for HA since 1996 has proven to be very effective. From then on, the safety performance of HA sites is far better than the other sites.

As such, we've extended the Scheme from new works projects to maintenance and improvement works projects of HA since 2011.

We've also introduced Surprise Safety Inspection Programme for new works contracts to assess the safety performance of the contractors.

This shows that the Housing Authority is very committed and pays great attention to raising the site safety standards

We, the Occupational Safety and Health Council will also promote the OSH dutifully, keeping pace with our society and striving for excellence.

Last month, we launched Hong Kong Safety and Health Certification Scheme, using conformity assessment that matches the standards of the ISO International Organization for Standardization and IEC International Electrotechnical Commission.

We have rendered accreditation services for all kinds of eligible OSH employees, as well as safety and health systems.

We hope the Hong Kong Safety and Health Certification Scheme can motivate the OSH employees and organizations to continue to improve their standards. In doing so, the safety culture of the entire industry and society will be ameliorated. It is very appropriate to use “Risk Assessment is the Key to Site Safety” as the theme of the forum this year.

I want to quote from the philosopher George Santayana:

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”.

We must learn a lesson from the past, avoiding the same incidents happening again in the future.

Everyone is responsible for site safety. I hope every developer, professional, contractor, subcontractor and frontline staff will do things from the bottom of their heart. Let’s do this together, upholding safety, stepping towards “Zero Incident”. Thank you everyone.

Thank you Chairman Wong. Please be seated.