

Keynote Address by Mrs Irene CHENG

Assistant Director of Housing (Development and Procurement)

Time flies, and this year marks the ninth Site Safety Forum for Works Contracts and Property Services Contracts co-organised by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (the Authority) and the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC). I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the representatives from the industry for their immense support and participation throughout all these years. This Forum has become a communication platform for all players in the industry to share their insight and experience regarding common concerns in the industry. Through this Forum, I hope we can come up with inspirational ideas and initiatives to minimise accidents and incidents on work sites.

Embracing the four core values of "Caring", "Committed", "Customer-focused" and "Creative", the Authority, as always, continues to implement management systems with a view to raising the quality and safety standards at sites and promoting best practices for upgrading the overall quality of project management.

To this end, the Authority is committed to fostering site safety through the supply chain by way of a three-pronged approach. The new initiatives taken or being explored by the Authority under this strategy in the past year include:

A. Procurement strategy and performance monitoring mechanism with incentives and sanctions

1. The Surprise Safety Inspection Programme score index was incorporated into the system scores.
2. Study was made on streamlining site safety audit.
3. Audit criteria for building services contractors under the Safety Auditing System were reviewed for enhancement.
4. The alert and warning trigger on account of accident rate was revised.
5. An occupational injury, incident and disease surveillance system was being established.

B. Contract requirements and administration

1. Compliance with legal requirements and guidelines of the trade
 - The Code of Practice for the Loading of Vehicles issued by the Transport Department was incorporated into the specifications.
 - The Guidelines on Planking Arrangement for Providing Working Platforms on Bamboo Scaffolds issued by the Construction Industry Council (CIC) were incorporated into the specifications.
2. Strengthened contract requirements
 - Contractors are required to provide working platform, platform ladder or step ladder for working at height. Straight ladder should only be used for access.
 - Contractors are required to conduct risk assessment on protruding reinforcement bars and provide temporary protective measures.
 - Contractors are required to provide sunglasses and shoe insoles for the Authority's site staff.
3. System enhancement

The Surprise Safety Inspection Programme score was linked with the Integrated Pay for Safety, Environment and Hygiene Scheme. The Scheme for lift projects was also revised to align with the CIC's Guidelines on Safety of Lift Shaft Works.



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4. Exploration of new initiatives
 - Study was made on the provision of protection gate at site vehicular ingress/ egress to ensure pedestrian safety.
 - Study was made on the installation of electronic alarm on heavy mobile machinery for detection of workers entering the area of manoeuvre of the machinery.
 - Feasibility on the provision of Automated External Defibrillators at site was explored.
 - Inclusion of enhancement measures suggested by contractors into contract specifications after their meetings with Procurement Review and List Management Board / Contractors Review Committee was explored.

C. Research, Training and Promotion

1. Study was made on the use of common smartphone applications to improve site management of contractors, enhance project monitoring and reporting carried out by the Authority's site supervisory staff, and facilitate the exchange of information.
2. Graphics of mal-practices and near miss incidents were provided to the trade for training and promotion purposes.
3. Expressed concern about the safe operation of mobile cranes and put forward suggestions for consideration by the industry stakeholders:
 - Review of enrolment requirements of signallers
 - Improvement to practical training for crane operators
 - Study on a demerit system for lifting operators including crane operators, signallers and slingers
 - Establishment of safety procedures for crane erecting and dismantling
4. Participated in the CIC's working group on the safe operation of lorry-mounted cranes.

With the implementation of the three-pronged strategy, the accident rate per 1 000 workers for new works sites dropped from 29.2 accidents in 2004 to 6.4 accidents in 2014, representing a decrease of 78%. Nevertheless, we need to sustain our efforts as there is still a long way to achieve Zero Incident. I hope that players in the industry at all levels can be united to work towards this common goal.

Near miss incidents and even fatal accidents caused by lifting operations have occasionally occurred in recent years. To prevent accidents due to human negligence, we organised a competition this year specially to encourage our contractors and sub-contractors of new works to practise "Pointing and Calling" in lifting operations and other high risk activities. Through the award ceremony held in recognition of the remarkable achievements made by the contractors and sub-contractors in implementing "Pointing and Calling", we hope, in collaboration with the OSHC, to disseminate the oral commands used by the award winners to all the Authority's new works sites. In the long run, we expect all the work sites in Hong Kong to adopt these Pointing and Calling commands.

The theme of the forum this year is "Process Control Programme: Strictly follow work procedures to prevent accident". Promoting the use of Pointing and Calling is befitting this theme. With the adoption of Pointing and Calling on all sites in Hong Kong, we will be making a good stride towards Zero Incident.

Lastly, I hope that all our guests and representatives from the industry can take the opportunity of this forum to share experience in and exchange views on the promotion of good practices to foster a site safety culture in Hong Kong.



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