

Message by Mr Conrad WONG, JP

Chairman of the Occupational Safety and Health Council



Mr Conrad WONG
BBS, JP

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has long been our partner in the promotion of occupational safety and health. This year marks the ninth anniversary of the "Site Safety Forum for Works Contracts and Property Services Contracts". The theme of the forum this year is "Process Control Programme: Strictly Follow Work Procedures to Prevent Accident".

In the past, accidents were usually the result of deviation from procedures for the sake of convenience. Therefore, we found that the "pointing and calling" system is one of the effective tools to raise our vigilance and reconfirm work process. The Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) introduced the system of "pointing and calling" from Japan years ago. "Pointing" means pointing one's finger at a target, while "calling" means saying a command for confirmation. HA has been actively implementing the "pointing and calling" system at its work sites, especially on high-risk activities, in order to minimise accidents.

To further enhance safety management by contractors, we will continue to manage, on HA's behalf, the safety auditing systems of new works contracts, maintenance and improvement works contracts, as well as lift and escalator works. Safety audits enable us to effectively monitor contractors' execution of method statement. OSHC is updating and revising the contents of audit to keep abreast of the current site procedures. Meanwhile, we continue to conduct surprise site inspections on new works projects, which can help HA to check and monitor contractors' overall performance on occupational safety and health more efficiently.

In his blog, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare Mr Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung drew our attention to work safely when carrying out Repair, Maintenance, Alteration and Addition (RMAA) works. I would like to take this opportunity to call on the industry again to use working platforms that comply with the safety standards in work above-ground operations. We must not overlook work safety for the sake of convenience. As a matter of fact, most of the fatal accidents at work in the past were caused by falling down from ladders, just from a height of one or two metres. To improve the situation, OSHC and the Labour Department (LD) launched a sponsorship scheme in April this year to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the RMAA sector to acquire light-duty working platforms (including step platform and hop-up platform) that comply with the safety requirements. The scheme is well received so far.

To further facilitate the improvement of occupational safety performance in the RMAA sector, OSHC, in collaboration with LD, has launched the "OSH Star Enterprise - Pilot Scheme on RMAA Works Safety Accreditation", which aims to enhance safety standards and prevent accidents by providing SME contractors with safety management system assessment, training and subsidies for the purchase of fall-arrest and other protective equipment. At the same time, the Scheme can help the insurance sector to identify the safety-conscious contractors and thereby provide them with a favourable premium rate when obtaining employees' compensation insurance. 30 SMEs have been

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accredited star enterprises and listed in the register of OSH Star Enterprises since the launch of the Scheme, and their expenses on employees' compensation insurance have been cut down by \$4.5 million. The register also serves as a good reference for home owners and occupants to identify the safety-conscious SMEs in the selection of RMAA contractors. We will work with the related government departments, trade associations and large enterprises to promote this register. I hope that friends from the RMAA sector present today will join the Scheme and become one of the star enterprises on the register.

Over the years, OSHC and HA have been working closely towards the goal of "Safe Work and Zero Incident", and our efforts have met with remarkable success. I hope that through different collaboration opportunities, OSHC can join hands with more and more stakeholders in the construction industry to achieve the common goal of providing a safe and healthy work environment where everyone can go to work cheerfully and go home safe and sound.



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