

Message by Mr YING Yiu Hong, Stanley, JP **Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)**



Mr YING Yiu Hong, Stanley
JP

Thank you for joining us in the Site Safety Forum for Works Contracts and Property Services Contracts today.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of this Forum, which also signifies that the Housing Authority (HA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) have joined hands to organise this important activity for the tenth time for the promotion of site safety. This Forum provides a regular platform for the members of the industry to constantly share experiences and initiatives on the best practices for safety. By working closely with supporting organisations and the industry, we have successfully promoted a safety culture at all tiers and actively boosted site health and safety performance in the last decade.

As an organisation devoted to caring the society, HA has the responsibility to ensure the safety of our staff and frontline workers at work. “Zero Fatal Accident” has always been our safety target and we have spared no effort in keeping the accident rate per 1 000 workers down to less than 12 accidents. Through our continuous efforts over the years, we have achieved a high standard of safety performance on all HA’s construction sites. Ever since 2010, the accident rates per 1 000 workers on HA’s new works and maintenance works sites have been kept at single-digits. Such results are the fruit of the collaboration between us and our partners.

To encourage our partners to aspire to a higher safety standard, this year HA adjusted the target accident rate from 12 accidents to 9 accidents per 1000 workers. We are confident that we can achieve this higher safety standard. We also believe that this new target can help our contractors further improve the safety and health of the working environment.

Owing to the boom of construction activities in Hong Kong and the rising amount of public rental housing production, many new workers are drawn to work on HA sites. Since these workers are new to HA sites, they need to familiarise themselves with the work practices, thus creating additional work pressure for the site supervisors. On the other hand, as our veteran workers are getting old, they are more prone to accidents. Because of this, it is important for us to work with our contractors to strengthen the training and supervision of the frontline workers and enhance the guidelines on safety at work and quality management. These are challenges we must face in the few years to come.

The past, if not forgotten, is a guide for the future. During the ten-year period from 2006 to 2015, 191 fatal accidents happened in the construction industry, 9 of which were on HA sites, reminding us that we should never lower down our guard on site safety. In 2015, there were 9 fatal accidents involving workers falling from height, accounting for almost half of the 19 fatal accidents happened in the construction industry that year. In fact, falling from height is the main cause of fatal accidents on site in recent years, and the situation has aroused grave concern of the industry. The theme for this year’s forum is “Control the Risk at Source Effectively will Improve Work Performance at Height”. We hope that everyone could understand the importance of controlling risks at source, especially when it involves work at height, in order to prevent accidents and protect the safety of workers.

Embracing the core values of “Caring, Customer-focused, Creative and Committed”, HA, being a responsible developer and employer, has always cared for the needs of our staff and frontline workers and paid attention to the safety and health performance in every aspect. Following the Champion Award in 2011, we have recently received the Gold Award (Client-Developer Category) at the Safety Leadership Awards 2016 co-organised by the Lighthouse Club and the Construction Industry Council, showing that our leadership in the promotion of safety and health has once again earned the recognition of the industry.



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We will continue to work closely with all the stakeholders for continuous improvement on site safety standards and performances, and foster a safer and healthier working environment through a “Three-Pronged Approach”. The first prong is to implement procurement strategy and performance monitoring mechanisms with incentives and sanctions to motivate contractors to strengthen safety management through the supply chain. The second prong is to strengthen contract requirements and administration to enable the adoption of the best practices above and beyond the statutory requirements. The third prong is to work in partnership with the stakeholders in research, promotion and training so as to raise the safety awareness and enhance the safety measures for the ultimate goal of “Zero Incident”.

Lastly, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to OSHC, all the supporting organisations, guest speakers and participants from the industry for making this Forum a success for the tenth consecutive year. We firmly believe that with the collaborative effort by both the management and frontline staff, we can definitely make continuous improvement on site safety standards and performances, so that our staff and frontline workers can work in a safe and healthy environment, which in turn will be conducive to the production of quality housing and the provision of good management and maintenance services.



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