

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



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JP

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

This annual promotion event on site safety co-organised by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) has been well-received by the supporting organisations and the industry. This forum has become a regular platform for communication to enable OSHC winning teams and members of the industry to share their experience and initiatives on the best practices for work safety.

As an organisation devoted to the caring for society, HA is very concerned with the work safety of our colleagues and the front-line staff and strives to create a safe and healthy working environment for employees. Zero fatal accident has always been our target for work safety and we have worked vigorously to keep the accident rate down to a low level. To pursue zero accident, we adjusted the target accident rate from 12 accidents to 9 accidents per thousand workers in 2016 to encourage our business partners to aspire to a higher safety standard.

The safety performance of HA's sites has been satisfactory over the years. The accident rates per thousand workers in HA's new works sites and maintenance works sites have remained single digit since 2009 and 2010 respectively. In 2016, the accident rates of our new works sites and maintenance works sites dropped to 6.8 accidents and 1.5 accidents per thousand workers respectively, which were lower than the average accident rate of 34.5 accidents per thousand workers in the industry. Nevertheless, we should not be complacent.

Bearing in mind the mottos of "prevention is better than cure" and "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure", we are fully committed to enhance site safety and prevent accidents through pre-emptive actions. The theme of the forum this year is "Careful design can reduce accidents and ensure smooth and safe execution of works". We strongly believe that a well-planned design can effectively prevent accidents at the source. To be vigilant of safety is a shared responsibility. From planning, design to construction, every process in our work, including construction, management, maintenance and repair, should take safety into consideration. Noting the emphasis placed by HA designers on safety, the number of accidents in maintenance and cleaning works would definitely be reduced in the future. The results will speak for themselves.

To reduce potential hazards for the protection of on-site workers and users of the facilities, we need to carefully plan our works projects, irrespective of temporary works or permanent facilities. Also our design teams, including HA's design task force and contractors, will design the work processes in planning, building and management meticulously to eliminate, reduce and control the risks to workers during operation. Safety design involves making choices on related matters such as design approach, use of materials and building style, all these require comprehensive considerations. Therefore, resolute and positive in decision making will facilitate the enhancement of occupational safety in work cycles, thus achieving the goal of "prevention through design" effectively.

In view of the above, we have been working actively to pursue safety through design and planning. In fact, the concept of "safety comes first" has always been an integral part of our work and is inherent in our "DNA". This "Safety DNA" will continue



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to spread out to every part of the industry, including building contractors, service contractors, staff members and other stakeholders, motivating everyone to make their best efforts to promote and implement safe practices.

Last but not least, I wish to thank OSHC, the supporting organisations, guest speakers and participants from the industry for making this forum a success for the eleventh consecutive year. We firmly believe that with the concerted efforts of both the management and frontline staff, we can no doubt continue to enhance the standards and performance on site safety, and create a safer and healthier working environment for our colleagues and frontline staff. This will help us build quality housing and provide good management and maintenance services for residents in the public housing estates.

Thank you very much!



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