

Keynote Speech by Ms YEUNG Kwong-yim, Connie, JP Deputy Director of Housing (Development and Construction) cum Chairperson of Housing Department Site Safety Sub-committee



Ms YEUNG Kwong-yim, Connie
JP

The theme of the Forum this year is “Caring Culture for Safe Work Practice”. We hope that with the joint effort of all stakeholders in the industry, we are able to foster a caring culture in order to safeguard the safety and health of our frontline workers. This forum will also pay attention to the safety practices of work-at-height and promotion of safety innovations.

The number of workers employed to work in the projects of Housing Authority (HA) increases year by year. It is our responsibility to walk extra miles to reinforce site safety and health management for these workers. These are the accident rate and number of industrial fatal accidents on sites in the last decade, with the figures of New Works shown in red, maintenance and improvement works in green.

In 2018, we convened a workshop to immediately look into all the measures relating to site safety management. The workshop was attended by project contractors to review and enhance safety measures and actions were taken to effectively monitor and control construction risk, with special emphasis on the prevention of falling when handling materials on delivery vehicles and falling through floor openings.

In addition, we organised another workshop to review safety measures with stakeholders of the industry such as the Labour Department, the Occupational Safety and Health Council, the Construction Industry Council (CIC), the Contractors Associations and Trade Unions. We enhanced the requirements on work-at-height with reference to the views received in the workshops. Based on the good practices collected in the workshops, CIC has recently published a pamphlet on safety of working at height to provide a useful reference for the industry.

Besides, we have improved the working environment with the use of technology, such as the application of radio frequency identification (RFID) to

- verify the identity of machine operator;
- check the information of the machinery and workers;
- control the access of workers to the high-risk zones; and
- introduce an alarm system for lifting operation.

Other examples of application of technology include:

- Stop the fork-lift truck from operation after the operator leaves his seat for over 2 seconds.
- All tower cranes must have a second brake to stop the operation of the cranes in the event of main brake malfunction.
- Application of cordless hand-held electrical tools.



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We have strengthened site safety management and implemented the accreditation of the Safety Supervisor (Construction) through specification to improve site safety. More than these, we have introduced Safety Climate Index Survey and Work Safe Behaviour Programme. The Pay for Safety, Environment and Hygiene Scheme has also been enhanced in a bid to:

- encourage timely report of accidents / incidents by contractors;
- encourage submission of technical data on safety innovation for checking;
- improve site housekeeping; and
- encourage better performance in surprise safety inspections through more stringent assessment criteria for payment.

In respect of training, we have incorporated terms in contracts requiring contractors to introduce mentor scheme so that new tower crane operators can learn first-hand how to operate a crane from the more experienced operators in the control cabin. We believe that through innovative technology, reinforcement of the safety awareness of supervisors and workers, and more stringent assessment criteria for the Pay for Safety Scheme, we will be able to eliminate and control the risk at source.

On the monitoring of performance, we have revised the assessment criteria of the Performance Assessment Scoring System (PASS), Safety Audit and Surprise Safety Inspection in line with our enhanced building specification requirements, with a view to strengthening the monitoring on the contractors' performance. In September 2018, a new incident report mechanism was launched to facilitate timely reporting of incidents by our contractors through mobile devices.

On research, training and promotion, HA will continue to conduct research on site safety enhancement measures, such as the increased use of precast elements prefabricated off site, the adoption of Modular Integrated Construction (MiC) and the use of precast structural walls and lift shafts. We will continue to provide safety training, e.g. the in-house online refresher safety training programme for works staff of Housing Department was enhanced.

Safety and health go hand in hand. Good health is important for every worker as the lack of it will seriously affect our ability to work. Therefore, apart from the construction industry, today we have also invited colleagues from the Labour Department and the Department of Health to share with us knowledge on safety and the healthy way of living.



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Through the signing of the “Caring Culture Charter” today, we have demonstrated our common determination to promote a caring culture to safeguard the safety and health of our workers. It is my sincere hope that all our workers can go home safely every day after work to enjoy a happy life with their families.

