

Keynote Speech by Mr LUK Hing-chuen Assistant Director of Housing (Estate Management) (3)



Mr LUK Hing-chuen

As the largest landlord in Hong Kong, the Housing Authority (HA) not only provides accommodation but also proper estate management services for millions of people in the territory. To maintain the quality of our estate facilities, we have to carry out a great number of routine maintenance works every day. Irrespective of major renovations or minor repairs, they are all closely related to the daily lives of the estate residents.

The significant increase in the number of building and renovation projects has led to the tight supply of maintenance workers in recent years. Last year, accidents occurred on construction sites one after another and a high number of workers were involved in these accidents. According to the Labour Department's statistics in 2018, 18 accidents, with two of them fatal, occurred in HA maintenance works, representing an accident rate of 5.7 accidents per thousand workers. Industrial accidents have been on the rise in the last two years, and the situation warrants our serious consideration.

Regarding the improvement measures on lift maintenance works, we have:

- reviewed the existing work procedures of lift maintenance and lift modernisation works, resulting in the revision and upgrading of some of the audit items and scoring schemes; and
- designed and promoted new hazard signs to enhance the workers' safety awareness in relation to entering or working on lift car top.

Regarding the improvement measures on truss-out scaffold, we have:

- reviewed the incidents of injuries and fatalities, the effectiveness of improvement measures and the follow-up actions with the district maintenance building contractors;
- adjusted the weighting of audit score for high-risk items, particularly the work-above-ground items; and
- reviewed the Surprise Safety Inspection System to ensure high-risk work safety through stringent safety inspection and implementation of safety management system.

This year, HA hopes to reduce the risk of workers' injury in estate management, maintenance and improvement works by raising the safety standards in the working environment. Therefore, we will step up our efforts to promote and implement the guidelines that have already been in force at work sites and at the same time introduce new measures:

(1) Contract Provisions and Administration

- We will elaborate the detailed requirements of the safety plans in the district term maintenance contracts.



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We bolster caring culture for safety and health of our workers

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- The implementation of the Occupational Injury Alert and Warning Triggering System will be continued.
- We will include “safety assessment” in the tender contracts of outsourced property management services, cleansing services and security services. Also, companies with records of non-compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance or the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance will be barred from tendering.
- In addition, we will raise the safety awareness of contractors by promoting the importance of occupational safety and health through briefings.

(2) Procurement Strategy and Performance Monitoring

- The safety auditing system for maintenance and improvement works has been upgraded to version 1.2 and the requirement of safety audit has been extended to cover the contracts of civil engineering improvement works and the term contracts of geotechnical engineering works.
- The element of caring culture has been incorporated as part of the safety auditing system. It is hoped that with our contractors integrating a caring culture into their project management, hopefully a friendly relationship can be established between the staff and workers. This will help create a harmonious working atmosphere in which co-workers will show more care for each other when working. Contractors will be rewarded for providing caring culture-related activities for workers and new recruits to help build a friendly working environment.

(3) Research, Training and Promotion

- The new standard of ISO 45001 will be implemented to assess the performance of planned estate maintenance works on occupational safety and health in a more systematic manner and also to promote a safety culture in estates to improve the working environment.
- We will continue to work with the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) to explore ways to improve site safety.
- We will update the online courses on occupational safety and health and the Site Safety Handbooks, etc.
- We will continue to hold safety meetings regularly with representatives from OSHC, Construction Industry Council and stakeholders of the industry for sharing information on safety and drawing the attention of various parties on site safety.



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The focus of the theme of this year's forum is to explore ways to foster a caring culture so as to minimise or even prevent accidents and to ensure the safety of workers. We hope our contractors and business partners can understand that most sites accidents are the results of a series of careless mistakes. A serious accident can cause death and affect not only the worker himself but also his family and friends. Therefore, a simple word of reminder and care from you may help prevent a potential accident. Please be generous with your care. A friendly reminder to your co-workers can make a difference.

Last but not least, I call upon all our colleagues and business partners to join hand in building a safe and sound working environment.

