

Keynote Speech by Mr LUK Hing-chuen



As the largest landlord in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) not only provides safe and comfortable accommodation for millions of people, but also carries out proper maintenance works, delivers management services and so forth on a daily basis to maintain the quality of estate facilities.

Everyone has been working extremely hard in this pandemic-stricken year. No matter how scorching the heat was, fellow colleagues in building works and staff in property management, security and cleansing services have exerted their utmost in reducing community infection by taking frequent inspection, cleansing and pandemic prevention measures, while wearing appropriate protective gear to perform their duties in a whole-hearted manner. I would like to take this special opportunity to extend my heartfelt appreciation for their remarkable efforts.

As far as site safety was concerned, 17 accidents occurred in HA's estate maintenance works in 2019, representing an accident rate of 5.3 accidents per thousand workers. We continue to strive for improvement on this front to minimise the occurrence of work injury accidents. About 70% of such accidents involved new recruits and part-time workers. For the sake of these workers, we have incorporated real samples of accidents in HA's works over the past few years and the improvement recommendations into workers' induction courses as part of the materials in the compulsory curriculum, the purpose of which is to raise the crisis awareness of new recruits at work and enhance their competency in following safe working procedures by citing real cases of injuries in an actual working environment.

Besides, we have taken forward safety caring measures under the safety auditing system for maintenance and improvement works. The Caring Programme for New Construction Workers has been implemented to encourage the adoption of a more caring attitude towards fellow workers and new recruits. Regular health checks for site workers are conducted for them to have a better understanding of their health conditions and for early identification of health problems. We regularly upgrade the safety auditing system so that the site safety standards of contractors can keep up with the times.

Implementation of the safety supervisor accreditation scheme has been added as a requirement in contractual provisions as a means to raise the standard of safety supervisors, thereby enhancing their competence in site safety control and supervision. Regarding machines involved in numerous physical injury accidents, such as portable abrasive cutters, we have incorporated into the new contract a number of requirements on automatic safety brake mechanism in the hope that more automatic protective devices can be introduced for ensuring workers' safety.

To attain a higher site safety standard, we have successfully migrated from OHSAS 18001 to ISO 45001, the latest Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS) for planned maintenance and improvement works in order to boost our capability in system management.

As regards the repair, maintenance and enhancement works of lifts and escalators, we have, apart from allocating additional resources to carry out various improvement projects, raised the prevailing technical standards of lifts and escalators for enhancing their safety and reliability. Meanwhile, we maintain close contact with the industry and strengthen mutual co-operation through regular meetings to enhance the safety of site work and maintenance.

In the tendering of outsourced property management services, cleansing services and security services, we have included terms that bar companies with records of non-compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance or the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance from tendering. Furthermore, as required under the terms of outsourced property management services and cleansing services contracts, tenderers should have obtained accreditation of OHSMS certification.

In an effort to raise the safety awareness of contractors, we continue to implement the Alert and Warning Trigger System for accidents and promote the importance of occupational safety and health through briefings.

The theme of this year's forum is to explore ways to ensure workers' safety through risk management. We hope that all contractors and partners understand that risk management plans and their implementation are of equal importance and that no positive results will come about without concrete actions. I call upon all our colleagues and business partners to continue to join hands in building a safe and sound working environment.

