

## Message by Dr Alan CHAN Hoi-shou, JP



The Safety Forum for Works Contracts and Property Management Services Contracts is conducted online this year, but this does not stop us from determining to share experiences with each other and to enhance safety on sites and in property management services.

Though we have been and are under the influence of the epidemic to varying degrees in terms of our daily life and work, we should not be excused from paying attention to work safety. It is worrying to see a number of industrial fatal accidents in the construction industry from early this year to mid-October, which have caused the death of 12 workers and involved, among others, working at height and the operation of heavy machinery.

To encourage employers, foremen, workers and stakeholders to exercise extra vigilance over high-risk operations, increase awareness of key safety measures and take suitable precautionary measures to prevent accidents, the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) and the Labour Department worked together to launch the “Working at Height and Operation of Heavy Machinery Promotional Campaign”, focusing on two complicated and high-risk operations, namely “working at height” and “operating heavy machinery”. Frontline and management staff were also provided with practical safety tips through the means of thematic webinars, videos, comics, social media posts and dedicated webpages, making them aware of safety management measures for high-risk operations and encouraging them to conduct specific risk assessments in order to raise safety standards.

Property management and the daily life of the general public are intricately related. To maintain the quality of estate facilities, the Housing Authority (HA) has carried out quite a number of routine maintenance works ranging from major renovations to minor repairs. The OSHC has also co-operated with the HA to provide an independent safety audit for the HA’s maintenance and improvement works in order to enhance the safety quality of property management services.

The Independent Safety Audit Scheme that I just mentioned has been successfully implemented for over 20 years. Both the Audit Scheme and the Surprise Safety Inspection Programme enable us to effectively monitor the site safety performance of contractors to ensure construction safety. We will also regularly update the HA’s Safety Auditing System and the checklist for surprise safety inspections in order to keep them in line with the latest legislation and to meet new contract requirements. Moreover, to build up a good occupational safety and health culture, we regularly disseminate the latest safety information to the HA’s management staff and its contractors through seminars. In addition, we have been proactively assisting the HA to explore the feasibility of applying innovative technology and safety measures on sites, with a view to improving safety performance of HA sites via introducing new technology. The accident rate of HA sites was far below the overall average in the construction industry of Hong Kong, which set a good example for the industry to follow.

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my friends in the construction industry and the property management sector for your hard work and dedication to the development of Hong Kong. During this epidemic, may I wish you all good health, and let us stay positive to fight the virus!