



The Housing Authority (HA) has been a partner of the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) for years. It was since 1996 that the OSHC has supported the HA by developing an Independent Safety Audit Scheme (ISAS) for HA construction works and conducted surprise safety inspections of high risk activities. OSHC has also designed an ISAS for HA projects under maintenance works contracts to enhance site safety. Besides, the HA has pledged to engage with priority those occupational safety and health Star Enterprises awarded safety accreditation in repair, maintenance, alteration and addition works, and to include this engagement arrangement in its works contract requirements so as to encourage the industry to implement good safety practices. To ensure that safety supervisors are competent and qualified enough to cope with problems and discharge the relevant duties, the engagement of Accredited Safety Supervisors (Construction) is also incorporated as one of the requirements in works contracts.

In the first half of this year, the number of fatal work accidents in the construction and property management industries totalled 17, two of which involved falling from a ladder. At this point, we would like to appeal to all employers to purchase light-duty working platforms for their staff. Under the Enhanced Light-duty Working Platform Sponsorship Scheme for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) jointly launched by the OSHC and the Labour Department (LD), SMEs can purchase, for safety enhancement purpose, step platforms or hop-up platforms that comply with safety standards at a discount of up to 80%.

Since work accidents were frequently found in the construction industry in recent years, the OSHC organised the Construction Safety Promotional Campaign 2021 in collaboration with the LD, the HA, various government departments, organisations and chambers of commerce. The themes of the Campaign were "Working-at-Height Safety", "Lifting Operation Safety" and "Safety at Work under Inclement Weather", followed by a series of targeted publicity activities including talks and "Safety Saves Lives" videos. Among others, we introduced two new awards under the Construction Safety Award this year, namely the award of "Best Safety Enhancement Programme for Lifting Operation" for organisations and the special award of "Outstanding Lifting Operation Team in Occupational Safety and Health" in recognition of the outstanding performance of organisations and staff in the implementation of lifting operation safety.

During my earlier visit to a large-scale construction site, I saw more than a thousand workers from various departments and of different trades working at the same location. Those workers are required to bear in mind two important points. The first one is to be aware of the potential hazards overhead and underneath. A dynamic risk assessment should be conducted on site and prompt action be taken in response to the risks identified. For instance, when you are working at height, you have to consider how the work may affect the safety of workers below. If you notice any on-going works overhead, you should immediately stay away from the danger zone. As the saying goes, "A wise man does not stand beside a collapsing wall". The second point is to tie up loose ends. Before leaving a site, one should check thoroughly any unfinished works, clean up the site, and ensure that no hazard is left unattended where, for example, all floor openings must be covered properly.

This year, Hong Kong experienced the hottest May on record where the mean maximum temperature was 32.1°C. Under the hot weather, outdoor workers are reminded to drink water and take breaks regularly, and pay attention to their own physical conditions to avoid heat stroke. Earlier on, the OSHC worked with the LD to introduce the Portable Waist Fan Sponsorship Scheme for SMEs to sponsor SMEs to purchase portable waist fans that have passed a safety test. Both construction workers and security guards are beneficiaries of the Scheme. We got encouraging response from the industry and received 2 035 applications in just two months following the launch. Totally 21 429 portable waist fans will be distributed to SMEs of various industries. A series of upcoming promotional activities organised by the OSHC to prevent heat stroke are in place. We are currently working with labour unions to arrange on-site safety talks during lunch time not only to brief attendees on the prevention of heat stroke, but also distribute to them anti-heat items such as cooling towels, water bottles, etc.

Safety and health are equally important at work. Entrusted by the LD, the OSHC conducted a study on the "Relationship between Workplace Deaths and Work Condition". According to the findings, from 2016 to 2020, security guards and construction workers each accounted for about 20% of workplace deaths caused

by cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases (CCVDs), a figure that has aroused public concern. Nevertheless, the OSHC noted that more and more contractors and property management agencies have been enhancing their measures to improve employees' health. Some of their measures even won the Occupational Health Award in this regard. We learnt that some employers would provide a subsidy for their staff to have regular checkups. In some work sites, workers (especially machine operators) are also required to have their blood pressure measured before work. All of these measures are worth considering. If your company does not have a blood pressure monitor, you are welcomed to register for the "Joyful @ Healthy Workplace" and get a blood pressure monitor and a measuring tape for free.

The OSHC and the LD attach great importance to the high incidence rate of CCVDs among construction and property management practitioners. Later this year, in the hope of enhancing the awareness and early prevention of CCVDs among working people, especially those working in the property management and construction industries, we will step up our health promotional campaigns at workplaces to encourage them to exercise more, stick to a healthy diet and pay attention to their health conditions by, for example, measuring blood pressure and body weight. We hope that employers and workers will actively show their support and join hands to create a safe and healthy workplace.