

Here is the footage of “Housing Authority’s Site Safety Seminar for Capital Works New Works Contracts organised by the Hong Kong Housing Authority on 8 April, 2014. This is the 1st A & A session

The speakers, from left to right, were

Mr. Ray TSUI, Acting Senior Consultant of OSHC

Mr. Timothy LAU, Senior Manager / Safety & Health of the Housing Department

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Q: I ask the first question. It is about the Korea study tour. Does the occupational safety and health organization in Korea have auditing service?

A: Thank you, Mr. Sing. The occupational safety and health organization in Korea has assisted some organizations to establish safety management system, including auditing conducted by their consultant team. They also have a safety management system by another name. After the audit, there will be certificates for those who have passed. As I mentioned, the sites we visited were managed by rather large-scale construction companies in Korea. They have obtained the certificates. We believe the certification of safety management had received high recognition in Korea.

Q: My surname is Lam. We have talked about “version 1.5” today. It has been one year since the launch of this system. Is it a suitable stage to review whether contractors can meet the requirement. Will there be a review so that the “1.5 standard” can be more transparent? Many times, we find that accredited safety auditors have different interpretations of auditing standard. As a contractor, I hope there is a consensus on this.

A: Thank you for your opinions. Let me answer some of the questions now. I think there are a few parts for the answer. Every quarter, auditing reports will be delivered to Occupational Safety & Health Council to audit the reports through an established procedure. If we discover any problems, for example, in cases of different standards of auditing between auditors and us, we will ask the auditors to give us reasons for their auditing decisions and then to judge whether the decisions are appropriate.

Besides, what is important is that contractors will receive notification letters before each auditing. We have also reminded contractors to notify us within seven days after the receipt of report if there is any disagreement with auditors’ judgment. Currently, some contractors did inform us the area we should pay attention to. Definitely we would study the situation, but of course we will not raise their marks upon receiving

their feedbacks. This is certainly not the case. We would gather all possible information, including site situations, details in safety management system, information provided by the contractors and auditors. Detail analysis would be carried out before reaching a decision. On the other hand, in each quarter, we would submit reports of the audit findings and data analysis to the Safety & Health Unit of Housing Department.

In each quarter, we also review overall performance of contractors and the “1.5 version”, such as common problems and aspects for improvement. We also review it with Housing Department. One thing to supplement is that Occupational Safety & Health Council would arrange meeting with auditors regularly, including briefing on the standards of auditing.

We have looked at good, bad and common auditing findings on site. We would also share with all auditors so that they will not just focus on their sites, but become aware of the practice of other sites and be able to make reference to other practice. When they conduct auditing, we would provide suggestions for them.

Q: Thank you. With many new auditors joining and experienced auditors leaving for whatever reasons, will there be any analysis by Occupational Safety & Health Council on the quality/standards of the new auditors? Will there be any such data or relevant auditing marks? Did the marks decrease or increase because of the increased number of new auditors? Is there any data for our information?

A: Thank you for your question. Regarding new auditors, the first thing I want to address is when an auditor joins Occupational Safety & Health Council, prior to their application, the auditor needs to pass a series of procedures, including the assessment of the qualification, training, education and experience. After the application, there are interviews and the applicant needs to submit relevant qualifications / experience records. We would review their reports according to a series of procedures. The aim is to ensure auditors on list are all qualified, experienced and suitable to conduct the audit. I understand that you may concern if the audit result would be influenced, but the report we share today mainly focuses on the common practice. We have not prepared any figures for sharing. Still, as far as I remember, the variations of audit results were not significant among the recent quarters. I didn't notice that any new auditors had given extraordinary high or low marks.

One more thing to add is, we conduct interviews with new auditors in advance. Just as

I said, we meet them regularly and have an annual meeting to remind them. We have senior and experienced auditors as well as new auditors. We all know auditors go in pair whenever they conduct audit. New auditors would go in partnership with seniors so as to learn and seek help from the seniors. If the auditor is a new one and is selected in random selection, we will see if he/she looks for a more experienced auditor to be his/her assistant for sharing experience and smoother auditing with appropriate suggestions on site. Thank you.

Q: I would like to know if there are any statistics about the relationship of costs against audit result by sub-contractors.

A: Subcontractors' costs and?

Q: Subcontractors' costs on safety measures and the marks they gain. We have paid the money; it is important to know if there is a reasonable performance of safety. The statistics help us consider if the relationship between the marks and costs is reasonable.

A: I understand what you mean, but Occupational Safety & Health Council mainly assist Housing Department to conduct the safety audit of new works and lift works. We do not have figures and analysis of how much money spent on safety measures on site.

Do we have any other questions from the floor?