

Construction Industry Safety Award Scheme promotes occupational safety and health (with photos)

The Labour Department (LD) held the 24th Award Presentation Ceremony of the Construction Industry Safety Award Scheme today (April 28) to recognise principal contractors, sub-contractors, site personnel and frontline workers with good performances in the area of occupational safety and health (OSH). The scheme aims at enhancing OSH awareness and fostering a culture of safety in the construction industry.

This year's award scheme received an overwhelming response with participation from 191 construction sites. Among them, 83 sub-contractors and 131 safety teams competed for awards in two categories, namely Construction Sites and Safety Teams. A total of 30 workers were also nominated for the Safe Workers award in the course of assessment. The result of the award scheme will be uploaded onto the LD homepage later. Apart from the award presentation, a fun day was also held today to promote the message of OSH to the industry and the general public.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Commissioner for Labour, Ms May Chan, said that among the 24 fatal industrial accidents that occurred last year, 20 involved the construction industry, indicating that the industry still had the highest OSH risks. The LD will keep close tabs on the OSH standards in the construction industry, and formulate and adjust in a timely manner a multipronged approach in accordance with risk-based principles, including inspection and enforcement, publicity and promotion as well as education and training to boost the OSH culture in preventing accidents.

The ordinance in amending OSH legislation came into effect last year. With regard to extremely serious OSH contraventions, the maximum fines and imprisonment terms were increased to \$10 million and two years respectively. The penalties of various summary offences were also raised. Apart from optimising the legislation, the LD will set up Special Task Forces if necessary to conduct rigorous inspections and enforcement actions targeting construction sites accordingly to further strengthen the inspection and enforcement efforts.

Since the amendment ordinance took effect, the LD has unveiled comprehensive publicity work to enhance the promotion of the new penalties. In January this year, the LD collaborated with the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) to produce a special TV programme, namely "Both workers and employers shall abide by the law to ensure occupational safety", to disseminate the message of safeguarding OSH through a concerted effort of employers and employees. In addition, the LD organised the OSH Innovation and Technology Expo with the OSHC in March 2024 to promote the application of innovation and technology in the development of OSH. The LD also introduced the "OSH 2.0" mobile application in the same month, optimising the user

interface and adding various new features to provide the latest and more comprehensive OSH information.

In terms of education and training, the LD revised the contents of several mandatory safety training courses, and the revised "Code of Practice (CoP) on Safety Management" and "CoP for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety" were gazetted in February and April this year respectively to ensure that the safety rules are in line with the latest developments of the industry. The LD also plans to launch the revised "Guidance Notes (GN) on Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work" in May. The revised GN would be in tandem with the "Extremely Hot Weather" Special Alert of the Hong Kong Observatory to further assist the industry in adopting necessary heat stroke prevention measures. As well, the revised "CoP – Safety and Health at Work in Confined Spaces" is targeted to be launched in about four to five weeks.

Inaugurated in 1999, the Construction Industry Safety Award Scheme is co-organised by the LD with 16 organisations, namely the OSHC, the Development Bureau, the Hong Kong Housing Authority, the Occupational Deafness Compensation Board, the Construction Industry Council, the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board, the Hong Kong Housing Society, the Property Management Services Authority, the Hong Kong Construction Association, the Hong Kong General Building Contractors Association, the Hong Kong Construction Sub-Contractors Association, the Hong Kong Federation of Electrical and Mechanical Contractors, the Minor Works Contractor Association, the Hong Kong Association of Property Management Companies, the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union and the Federation of Hong Kong Electrical and Mechanical Industries Trade Unions.

