

Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident that happened in Fo Tan today

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about a fatal work accident that happened at a construction site in Fo Tan this afternoon (January 24), in which a male worker, while dismantling a metal I-beam on an elevating work platform, was struck by the suspended dismantled portion of the I-beam and fell from the work platform to the ground. He was certified dead at the scene. The LD is saddened by death of the worker and expresses its deepest sympathy to his family.

The LD's spokesman said, "We commenced an immediate on-site investigation as soon as we were notified of the accident and have issued suspension notices to the contractors concerned, suspending the dismantling work of I-beams at the construction site. The contractors cannot resume the work process until the LD is satisfied that suitable measures to abate the relevant risks have been taken."

The spokesman added, "We will complete the investigation as soon as possible to identify the cause of the accident, ascertain the liability of the duty holders and recommend improvement measures. We will take actions pursuant to the law if there is any violation of the work safety legislation."

To protect workers' safety, the LD reminds contractors that substantive support shall be provided to the structures being dismantled to prevent them from accidental displacement or sudden collapse during dismantling work.

The general duty provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance require employers to provide safe working environments, plant and systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the relevant provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for two years.

In regard to today's accident, the LD will issue a Work Safety Alert through its mobile application "OSH 2.0", website and email, giving a brief account of the accident concerned to duty holders, workers' unions, professional bodies of safety practitioners and others, and reminding the industry of the importance of following safety precautionary measures to prevent a recurrence of similar accidents.

The LD will also remind the employer concerned of the liability for employees' compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, assist family members of the deceased to claim employees' compensation and closely follow up on the case. For those with financial difficulties, the LD will assist them to apply for appropriate emergency funds. Subject to the needs and wishes of family members of the deceased, the LD will also liaise with

the Social Welfare Department for financial or other assistance.

For the sake of securing the safety and health of employees at work, the LD appeals to employers to provide plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and use personal protective equipment provided properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.