

Revised Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety to take effect tomorrow

â€‹The revised Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety (CoP) will officially take effect tomorrow (October 19). The CoP was gazetted on April 19 this year, and a grace period of six months was provided to allow the industry to have sufficient time to understand and prepare for the revised requirements.

During this grace period, the Labour Department (LD) has strengthened its publicity and promotion, as well as education and training through various channels to facilitate the industry's better understanding of the content of the CoP. These include disseminating relevant information through the LD website, the "OSH 2.0" mobile application and various mass media. In addition, a new "Work Safety Alert" animation specifically targeting truss-out bamboo scaffolds (TOS) has been produced. Relevant content has also been incorporated into the Mandatory Basic Safety Training Course (Construction Work) (commonly known as the "Green Card") and occupational safety and health (OSH) training courses organised by the LD. The LD has also co-organised with relevant organisations to conduct a series of talks and seminars and launch new television promotional videos to further explain the major revisions of the CoP.

The major revisions of the CoP include enhancing technical requirements for the bracings, putlogs and access and egress of bamboo scaffolds; prohibiting unauthorised alteration of bamboo scaffolding including putlogs; further specifying the requirements of supervising work of competent persons to the bamboo scaffolders who perform erection, addition, alteration or dismantling of bamboo scaffolds and inspection prior to inclement weather; and requiring all workers who perform erection, addition, alteration or dismantling of TOS to hold a valid certificate of "Advanced Level Truss-out Scaffolders Safety Training" or "Intermediate Level Truss-out Scaffolders Safety Training" issued by the Construction Industry Council before performing specified work.

A spokesperson for the LD said, "After the commencement of the revised CoP, the LD will continue to strengthen area patrols in the coming period to combat violations of scaffolding operations in renovation, maintenance, alteration and addition works. The inspection focuses include whether the erection, addition, alteration or dismantling of TOS is conducted under the immediate supervision of a competent person; whether the bamboo scaffolders of TOS hold valid certificates; whether suitable fall protection equipment and systems are provided and properly used by bamboo scaffolders; and the stability of the scaffolding. If any violations of the OSH legislation are detected, stringent enforcement actions will be taken immediately, including issuing suspension notices and improvement notices and initiating prosecutions without prior warning."

Under the general duty provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, employers are obligated to provide safe working environments, plant and system of work for their employees. Those who contravene the relevant provisions with serious circumstances are subject to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for two years.

The revised CoP can be downloaded from the LD website www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/content2_8b.htm. Enquiries about the CoP can be made at 2559 2297.