

For information on
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Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

Hong Kong's Occupational Safety Performance in 2008

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on Hong Kong's occupational safety performance in 2008.

Background

2. Promoting safety and health at work is an important item on the agenda of the Labour Department ("LD"). Over the years, we have been striving to enhance the standards of occupational safety and health by adopting a multi-pronged approach of legislation and enforcement, publicity and promotion, as well as education and training. We have also been working in close partnership with key stakeholders, including trade associations, workers' unions, related organisations and government departments to promote safety and health at work.

3. Through the collective efforts of all parties concerned, there has been a decline in both the number and the rate of occupational injuries in 2008 as compared to 2007. The safety performance of most major economic sectors, including the catering industry and the non-industrial sectors, has improved.

Recent Statistics

Occupational injuries¹

4. In 2008, the number of occupational injuries in all workplaces stood at 41 900, representing a drop of 4.7% when compared to 43 979 in 2007. The injury rate per 1 000 employees also decreased by 6.3% from 16.9 to 15.8. The number of occupational fatalities, however, increased by 5.2% from 172 to 181. The increase was largely attributed to an increase in the number of traffic accidents (+6 cases) and cases involving natural cause (+7 cases) (**Table 1**).

¹ Occupational injuries (including industrial accidents) are injury cases arising from work accidents, resulting in death or incapacity for work of over three days, and reported under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance.

Table 1 Occupational Injuries in All Workplaces

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 (compared with 2007)
Fatal	187	187	187	172	181 (+5.2%)
Non-fatal	43 838	44 080	46 750	43 807	41 719 (-4.8%)
Total	44 025	44 267	46 937	43 979	41 900 (-4.7%)
Injury Rate / 1 000 employees	18.1	17.8	18.4	16.9	15.8 (-6.3%)

5. In 2008, “Transport and Related Services” and “Sanitary and Similar Services” recorded increases in accidents. Nevertheless, most of the accidents were of a minor nature and were mainly due to “slip, trip or fall on the same level” and “injured whilst lifting or carrying”. A detailed breakdown of all cases of occupational injuries in 2008 by major economic activities is at **Annex 1**.

Industrial accidents²

6. The number of industrial accidents for all sectors in 2008 stood at 14 932, representing a drop of 7.4% over the figure of 16 117 in 2007. The accident rate per 1 000 workers also decreased by 7.3%, from 29.3 to 27.2 (**Table 2**).

² Industrial accidents refer to injuries and deaths arising from industrial activities in industrial undertakings as defined under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance

Table 2 Industrial Accidents in All Sectors

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 (compared with 2007)
Fatal	24	29	26	25	24 (-4.0%)
Non-fatal	17 509	16 888	17 260	16 092	14 908 (-7.4%)
Total	17 533	16 917	17 286	16 117	14 932 (-7.4%)
Accident Rate / 1 000 workers	31.5	30.6	31.5	29.3	27.2 (-7.3%)

7. Of the 24 industrial fatalities in 2008, 20 occurred on construction sites, while the remaining 4 in other industrial undertakings. The types of accident of these cases were “fall of person from height” (9 cases), “striking against or struck by moving object” (5 cases), “contact with electricity or electric discharge” (5 cases), “trapped by collapsing or overturning object” (2 cases), “struck by falling object” (1 case), “drowning” (1 case) and “exposure to fire” (1 case).

Industrial Accidents in the Construction Industry

8. The high-risk construction industry still recorded the highest number of fatalities and accident rate among various industry sectors. In 2008, the number of fatal accidents increased to 20 cases, compared with 19 cases in 2007. The accident rate per 1 000 workers rose from 60.6 to 61.4, up by 1.2%, but the number of industrial accidents decreased by 0.3% to 3 033 from 3 042 in 2007 (**Table 3**). That year also saw an increase in accidents involving repair, maintenance, alteration and addition (“RMAA”) works by 2.2% to 1 557 from 1 524 in 2007.

Table 3 Industrial Accidents in the Construction Industry

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 (compared with 2007)
Fatal	17	25	16	19	20 (+5.3%)
Non-fatal	3 816	3 523	3 384	3 023	3 013 (-0.3%)
Total	3 833	3 548	3 400	3 042	3 033 (-0.3%)
Accident Rate / 1 000 workers	60.3	59.9	64.3	60.6	61.4 (+1.2%)

9. The types of accident of the 20 industrial fatalities occurred on construction sites in 2008 were “fall of person from height” (8 cases), “striking against or struck by moving object” (4 cases), “contact with electricity or electric discharge” (5 cases), “trapped by collapsing or overturning object” (2 cases) and “struck by falling object” (1 case). A detailed breakdown of accidents in the construction industry by type of accident is at **Annex 2**.

Industrial Accidents in the Catering Industry

10. Although the catering industry still ranked top among all industries in terms of the number of accidents in 2008, its number of industrial accidents dropped by 9.3% to 8 049, compared with 8 876 in 2007. The accident rate per 1 000 workers also decreased by 10.9%, from 43.5 to 38.7 (**Table 4**). A detailed breakdown of accidents in the catering industry by type of accident is at **Annex 3**.

Table 4 Industrial Accidents in the Catering Industry

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 (compared with 2007)
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0 (---)
Non-fatal	9 410	8 902	9 294	8 876	8 049 (-9.3%)
Total	9 410	8 902	9 294	8 876	8 049 (-9.3%)
Accident Rate / 1 000 workers	51.5	47.3	47.2	43.5	38.7 (-10.9%)

Counter Measures

11. LD has implemented a series of measures, including enforcement campaigns as well as publicity and promotional drives, to enhance occupational safety and health awareness of employers and employees. In our enforcement and promotion efforts, we target primarily industries more prone to accidents, such as the construction and catering industries. In addition, we also focus on high-risk work activities, such as RMAA works, work-at-height and container handling.

Promotion and Publicity

12. LD organised a series of promotion campaigns, some jointly with relevant stakeholders, aiming at heightening safety awareness among employers and employees and cultivating a positive safety culture in the workplaces. Major promotional and publicity activities conducted in 2008 included the Construction Industry Safety Award Scheme, the Catering Industry Safety Award Scheme and a large-scale seminar on container handling safety.

13. Accidents in RMAA works have become a source of growing concern in recent years. Some of the RMAA works involve high-risk work processes such as work-at-height, use of truss-out scaffolds, use of ladders, work in confined spaces and use of electricity. With the introduction of various building maintenance schemes, such as the “Operation Building Bright” and the special operation to remove abandoned signboards, by the Administration, the number of RMAA works is expected to increase in the near future. In response, LD launched in 2008 a series of intensive promotion and publicity campaigns, targetting work-at-height and RMAA works to arouse the safety awareness of all parties involved. These included launching a two-year publicity campaign in November last year to remind workers to work safely and not to take risk with their lives and their families’ future. Major promotional and publicity activities included –

- (a) launching publicity via television, radio, Roadshow on buses and MTR trains, including broadcasting a new “Announcement in the Public Interest”, safety and health messages, mini dramas as well as short documentaries, etc;
- (b) enhancing the safety awareness of contractors, employers and employees via various promotional activities, such as staging roving exhibitions in shopping malls, publishing feature articles in popular newspapers and on the website of LD, displaying new posters and banners, mailing promotional items to contractors engaged in RMAA works, as well as organising safety seminars in collaboration with the Occupational Safety and Health Council (“OSHC”), the Hong Kong Housing Society (“HKHS”), District Councils/District Offices, trade associations and workers’ unions;
- (c) encouraging more small RMAA works contractors to join LD’s “Construction Industry Safety Award Scheme” in 2008/09 by introducing a new competition on the category of “Minor Renovation and Maintenance Works” and a new “Safety Awareness Award” under the Scheme;
- (d) publishing a leaflet targetting property management companies, building owners’ corporations, property owners, occupiers and members of the public to remind them of their liabilities for RMAA works accidents;
- (e) distributing guidebooks and related publications on RMAA works safety at Public Enquiry Service Centres of the Home Affairs Department and Property Management Advisory Centres of HKHS;
- (f) conducting safety seminars for RMAA contractors engaged by the Housing Department, HKHS and various universities; and

- (g) partnering with District Councils/District Offices to organise publicity and promotional activities to promulgate work-at-height and RMAA works safety at the district level.

Funding Support for SMEs to Purchase Safety Equipment

14. With the objective of helping small and medium-sized enterprises (“SMEs”) to purchase the necessary safety equipment, LD and OSHC have jointly launched a number sponsorship schemes in recent years. In addition to the two schemes targeting confined space and RMAA works, we have also introduced two new sponsorship schemes in the last two years –

- (a) **Cut Resistant Gloves and Slip Resistant Shoes Sponsorship Scheme for Catering SMEs** : A scheme jointly launched by LD and OSHC in late 2007 to help SMEs in the catering industry to purchase cut resistant gloves and slip resistant shoes for kitchen frontline workers for up to \$2,500. Up to 19 June 2009, a total of 201 applications have been approved and the subsidy granted amounted to some \$350,000 ; and
- (b) **Reversing Video Device Sponsorship Scheme for Heavy Vehicles on Construction Sites** : A scheme jointly launched by LD with OSHC and the Hong Kong Construction Association in May 2008 to encourage SMEs in the construction industry to install reversing video device on heavy vehicles to prevent accidents associated with reversing heavy vehicles in construction sites. Each eligible SME may receive a subsidy of up to \$2,500 to install the reversing video device. Up to 19 June 2009, a total of 641 applications have been approved with over \$1.6 million of subsidy granted.

Enforcement campaigns

15. LD continued to initiate special enforcement actions targetting high-risk sectors and work activities with a view to promoting safety awareness among relevant employers and employees. In 2008, 13 enforcement campaigns were launched, focusing on construction safety, safety of RMAA works, safety of tower cranes, safe operation of vehicles/mobile plant on construction sites, catering safety, cargo and container-handling safety, as well as fire and chemical safety. During these campaigns, rigorous enforcement actions were taken and improvement notices/suspension notices were issued whenever necessary to secure compliance and remove imminent risks of death or serious bodily injury.

16. To tie in with the promulgation by the Construction Industry Council (“CIC”) in June 2008 of the “Guidelines on Safety of Tower Cranes” and the “Guidelines on Safety of Site Vehicles and Mobile Plant”, LD took into account the standards prescribed in the guidelines and launched territory-wide safety campaigns to urge duty-holders in the industry to comply with the relevant safety legislation.

17. To deter unsafe practices in relation to RMAA works, particularly the use of truss-out scaffolds, LD launched a territory-wide safety campaign between February and March 2008. In light of the upsurge of serious accidents involving the use of electricity in RMAA works, another round of RMAA works safety campaign with emphasis on the safe use of electricity was conducted in August and September 2008.

18. To sustain our enforcement efforts against unsafe use of electricity in RMAA and other construction works, we mounted a special enforcement campaign on the safe use of electricity in May 2009. During the campaign, we issued enforcement notices and initiated prosecutions against contractors for violations of relevant safety provisions. Publications related to the safe use of electricity were disseminated to contractors to help them understand relevant statutory requirements.

19. To address the safety of lift and escalator maintenance and repair works, we mounted a special campaign in March 2009 to urge lift and escalator contractors to take necessary safety measures for works inside lift shafts and escalator pits, in particular the well-being of persons working alone. We also sent advisory letters to remind them to observe the relevant safety legislation and practical guidance stipulated in the “Code of Practice for Safety at Work (Lift and Escalator)”.

20. Noting the increased storage of containers in container yards, LD launched a safety campaign in May 2009 to regulate the safety performance of container handling workplaces, with particular focus on safe use of container handling equipment, proper stacking of containers and precautionary measures for inclement weather conditions. In addition, LD, in collaboration with major industry stakeholders, organises annual seminars to promote safe operations and safe work practices in container yards, and holds regular meetings with major industry players, including representatives from container yards. The seminar in 2009 was held on 27 April with about 250 participants, including representatives of trade associations and workers’ unions.

Way Forward

21. In the coming years, LD will continue to keep up its efforts to reduce the number of occupational injuries by working in close partnership with relevant stakeholders, including OSHC, CIC, trade associations, labour unions, professional bodies as well as other Government Bureaux/Departments. Highlights of our work in 2009 include –

- (a) focusing our enforcement efforts on construction hazards, such as work-at-height, use of electricity, repair and maintenance of lifts and escalators, tower crane operations, use of construction vehicles and mobile plant in light of the increased new works arising from the commencement of major infrastructure projects;
- (b) stepping up enforcement, publicity and promotional efforts targeting work-at-height, scaffolding safety, and RMAA works in anticipation of growing minor renovation and maintenance activities and various initiatives by the Government to accelerate minor works for the creation of jobs;
- (c) continuing to foster a strong safety culture and enhance the safety and health awareness of employers and employees in the construction and catering industries via publicity and promotion;
- (d) organising publicity campaigns for the construction industry targeting work-at-height, scaffolding safety, and RMAA works with focus on the safe use of truss-out scaffolds; and
- (e) continuing to launch various sponsorship schemes in collaboration with OSHC to provide SMEs with financial assistance to improve their occupational safety and health performance.

**Occupational Injuries in All Workplaces
in 2008
- analysed by Major Economic Activity -**

二零零八年所有工作地點之職業傷亡個案以主要經濟行業分析

Major Economic Activity 主要經濟行業	2007 二零零七年	2008 二零零八年	Change 增減	Percentage Change 增減率
Agriculture and Fishing 漁農業	176	186	10	5.7%
Mining and Quarrying 採礦及採石業	0	0	---	n.a.
Manufacturing 製造業	3 967 (21)	3 587 (16)	-380	-9.6%
Electricity and Gas 電力及燃氣業	33 (1)	48	15	45.5%
Construction 建造業	3 135 (37)	3 087 (36)	-48	-1.5%
Wholesale & Retail Trades, Restaurants and Hotels 批發、零售、飲食及酒店業	13 916 (16)	12 805 (16)	-1111	-8.0%
Transport & Related Services, Storage and Communication 運輸及有關行業、倉庫 及通訊業	5 023 (26)	5 169 (23)	146	2.9%
Financing, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services (including Import & Export Trade) 金融、保險、地產及商用服 務業（包括進出口貿易業）	5 772 (46)	5 487 (52)	-285	-4.9%
Community, Social & Personal Services 社區、社會及個人服務業	11 953 (25)	11 531 (38)	-422	-3.5%
Activities not adequately defined 未能介定之行業	4	0	-4	-100.0%
TOTAL 總數	43 979 (172)	41 900 (181)	-2079	-4.7%

Notes:

- Occupational injuries (including industrial accidents) are injury cases arising from work accidents, resulting in death or incapacity for work of over three days, and reported under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance. Since 1.1.1998, Labour Department has used the date of occurrence of an injury as the basis for computing work injury statistics instead of the date of reporting in order to reflect more accurately the number of work injuries occurring in the year.
- Figures in brackets denote the number of fatalities.
- The above injury figures are recorded as at 31 March 2009.
- "n.a." means not applicable.

註釋:

- 職業傷亡個案是指根據《僱員補償條例》呈報由工作意外引致死亡或失去工作能力3天以上的受傷個案（包括工業意外個案）。由1998年1月1日開始，勞工處採用個案發生日期替代個案呈報日期作為編算工作傷亡統計數據的基礎，以便更準確地反映所述時段內發生的工傷個案。
- 括號內的數字顯示死亡人數。
- 上列傷亡數字為截至2009年3月31日所紀錄的數字。
- "n.a." 是指不適用。

**Industrial Accidents in Construction Industry
in 2008
- analysed by Type of Accident -**

二零零八年建造業之工業意外個案以意外類別分析

Type of Accident 意外類別	2007 二零零七年	2008 二零零八年	Change 增減
Trapped in or between objects 受困於物件之內或物件之間	65 (2)	67	2
Injured whilst lifting or carrying 提舉或搬運物件時受傷	587	592	5
Slip, trip or fall on same level 滑倒、絆倒或在同一高度跌倒	507	576	69
Fall of person from height 人體從高處墮下	360 (9)	388 (8)	28
Striking against fixed or stationary object 與固定或不動的物件碰撞	318	281	-37
Striking against or struck by moving object 被移動物件或與移動物件碰撞	584	517 (4)	-67
Stepping on object 踏在物件上	32	22	-10
Exposure to or contact with harmful substance 暴露於有害物質中或接觸有害物質	20	24	4
Contact with electricity or electric discharge 觸電或接觸放出的電流	10 (1)	19 (5)	9
Trapped by collapsing or overturning object 受困於倒塌或翻側的物件	13 (2)	10 (2)	-3
Struck by falling object 遭墮下的物件撞擊	114 (3)	101 (1)	-13
Struck by moving vehicle 遭移動中的車輛撞倒	31 (1)	25	-6
Contact with moving machinery or object being machined 觸及開動中的機器或觸及以機器製造中的物件	197	246	49
Drowning 遇溺	1 (1)	0	-1
Exposure to fire 火警燒傷	12	11	-1
Exposure to explosion 爆炸受傷	2	1	-1
Injured by hand tool 被手工具所傷	155	97	-58
Injured by fall of ground 泥土傾瀉受傷	1	2	1
Asphyxiation 窒息	0	3	3
Contact with hot surface or substance 觸及灼熱表面或物質	17	22	5
Injured by animal 被動物所傷	1	0	-1
Injured in workplace violence 於工作場所暴力事件中受傷	0	0	---
Others 其他類別	15	29	14
Total 總計	3 042 (19)	3 033 (20)	-9

Notes:

- Industrial accidents refer to injuries and deaths arising from industrial activities in industrial undertakings as defined under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance. Since 1.1.1998, Labour Department has used the date of occurrence of an injury as the basis for computing work injury statistics instead of the date of reporting in order to reflect more accurately the number of work injuries occurring in the year.
- Figures in brackets denote the number of fatalities.
- The above accident figures are recorded as at 31 March 2009.

註釋:

- 工業意外是指《工廠及工業經營條例》所界定的工業經營內發生的受傷或死亡意外，而這些意外是因工業活動而引致的。由1998年1月1日開始，勞工處採用個案發生日期替代個案呈報日期作為編算工作傷亡統計數據的基礎，以便更準確地反映所述時段內發生的工傷個案。
- 括號內的數字顯示死亡人數。
- 上列意外數字為截至2009年3月31日所紀錄的數字。

**Industrial Accidents in Catering Industry
in 2008
- analysed by Type of Accident -**

二零零八年飲食業之工業意外個案以意外類別分析

Type of Accident 意外類別		2007 二零零七年	2008 二零零八年	Change 增減
Trapped in or between objects	受困於物件之內或物件之間	91	88	-3
Injured whilst lifting or carrying	提舉或搬運物件時受傷	1 170	1 155	-15
Slip, trip or fall on same level	滑倒、絆倒或在同一高度跌倒	1 346	1 261	-85
Fall of person from height	人體從高處墮下	46	54	8
Striking against fixed or stationary object	與固定或不動的物件碰撞	864	751	-113
Striking against or struck by moving object	被移動物件或與移動物件碰撞	559	407	-152
Stepping on object	踏在物件上	15	12	-3
Exposure to or contact with harmful substance	暴露於有害物質中或接觸有害物質	67	57	-10
Contact with electricity or electric discharge	觸電或接觸放出的電流	5	1	-4
Trapped by collapsing or overturning object	受困於倒塌或翻側的物件	2	0	-2
Struck by falling object	遭墮下的物件撞擊	35	44	9
Struck by moving vehicle	遭移動中的車輛撞倒	41	35	-6
Contact with moving machinery or object being machined	觸及開動中的機器或觸及以機器製造中的物件	127	100	-27
Drowning	遇溺	0	0	---
Exposure to fire	火警燒傷	18	7	-11
Exposure to explosion	爆炸受傷	3	0	-3
Injured by hand tool	被手工具所傷	2 219	2 151	-68
Injured by fall of ground	泥土傾瀉受傷	0	0	---
Asphyxiation	窒息	0	0	---
Contact with hot surface or substance	觸及灼熱表面或物質	2 134	1 814	-320
Injured by animal	被動物所傷	108	71	-37
Injured in workplace violence	於工作場所暴力事件中受傷	0	0	---
Others	其他類別	26	41	15
Total	總計	8 876	8 049	-827

Notes:

1. Industrial accidents refer to injuries and deaths arising from industrial activities in industrial undertakings as defined under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance. Since 1.1.1998, Labour Department has used the date of occurrence of an injury as the basis for computing work injury statistics instead of the date of reporting in order to reflect more accurately the number of work injuries occurring in the year.
2. Figures in brackets denote the number of fatalities.
3. The above accident figures are recorded as at 31 March 2009.

註釋:

1. 工業意外是指《工廠及工業經營條例》所界定的工業經營內發生的受傷或死亡意外，而這些意外是因工業活動而引致的。由1998年1月1日開始，勞工處採用個案發生日期替代個案呈報日期作為編算工作傷亡統計數據的基礎，以便更準確地反映所述時段內發生的工傷個案。
2. 括號內的數字顯示死亡人數。
3. 上列意外數字為截至2009年3月31日所紀錄的數字。