

For information on
17 June 2014

Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

Hong Kong's Occupational Safety and Health Performance in 2013

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on Hong Kong's occupational safety and health (OSH) performance in 2013.

Occupational Safety Performance

2. The number of occupational injuries¹ decreased from 39 907 in 2012 to 38 027 in 2013, representing a drop of 4.7%. The number of industrial accidents² for all sectors decreased from 12 547 in 2012 to 11 820 in 2013, down by 5.8%; and the accident rate per 1 000 workers also decreased by 7.8%, from 21.3 to 19.6 (**Table 1**). Most of the accidents, except those of the construction industry and container handling industry, were of minor nature and mainly due to “slip, trip or fall on the same level” and “incorrect manual lifting or carrying”.

¹ Occupational injuries refer to injury cases in workplaces reported under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, resulting in death or incapacity for work of over three days.

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 1 – Industrial Accidents

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Fatal	21	18	29	29	28 (-3.4%)
Non-fatal	13 579	13 997	13 629	12 518	11 792 (-5.8%)
Total	13 600	14 015	13 658	12 547	11 820 (-5.8%)
Accident Rate /1 000 workers	24.6	24.9	23.6	21.3	19.6 (-7.8%)

Figures in brackets denote % change of 2013 when compared with 2012.

3. Among the 28 industrial fatalities in 2013, 22 occurred at construction sites (figures of 2012 were 29 and 24 respectively). A breakdown of the industrial accidents by industry sectors in 2013 is at **Annex 1**. As at the end of May 2014, there were 15 industrial fatalities, of which 12 occurred at construction sites.

Industrial Accidents in the Construction Industry

4. There were 3 232 accidents in the construction industry in 2013, up by 2.3% when compared with 3 160 in 2012. The accident rate per 1 000 workers was 40.8, down by 8.0% as compared with 44.3 in 2012 (**Table 2**). A breakdown by types of accidents for the construction industry is at **Annex 2**.

5. Most of the 22 industrial fatalities in 2013 involved work-at-height (15 cases) and tunnelling or underground works (4 cases). Most of the work-at-height fatalities involved workers falling from bamboo scaffolds (7 cases), working platforms or falsework (2 cases) and ladders (2 cases). There were 12 construction fatalities in 2014 as at end May, most of which involved work-at-height (4 cases) and lifting operation (3 cases).

Table 2 – Industrial Accidents in the Construction Industry

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Fatal	19	9	23	24	22 (-8.3%)
Non-fatal	2 736	2 875	3 089	3 136	3 210 (+2.4%)
Total	2 755	2 884	3 112	3 160	3 232 (+2.3%)
Accident Rate /1 000 workers	54.6	52.1	49.7	44.3	40.8 (-8.0%)

Figures in brackets denote % change of 2013 when compared with 2012.

Industrial Accidents in the Food and Beverage Services Sector

6. The number of industrial accidents in the food and beverage services sector topped all industries. In 2013, the number of industrial accidents decreased to 5 740, down by 7.7% when compared with 6 216 in 2012. The accident rate per 1 000 workers decreased from 26.4 to 24.2, down by 8.5% (**Table 3**). A breakdown of the accidents in the food and beverage services sector by types of accidents is at **Annex 3**.

Table 3 – Industrial Accidents in the Food and Beverage Services Sector

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Fatal	0	0	0	1	0 (-100%)
Non-fatal	7 470	7 541	7 158	6 215	5 740 (-7.6%)
Total	7 470	7 541	7 158	6 216	5 740 (-7.7%)
Accident Rate /1 000 workers	35.7	34.7	30.9	26.4	24.2 (-8.5%)

Figures in brackets denote % change of 2013 when compared with 2012.

Industrial Accidents in the Container Handling Industry

7. In 2013, the number of industrial accidents involving container handling decreased to 65, down by 4.4% when compared with 68 in 2012. Common accidents included “slip, trip or fall on same level”, “striking against or struck by moving object” and “striking against fixed or stationary object”. There was one industrial fatality involving container handling in 2013, whilst there were three in 2014 as at the end of May.

Counter Measures

8. The Labour Department (LD) continues to safeguard the safety and health of people at work through inspection and enforcement, publicity and promotion, as well as education and training, with a view to minimising hazards at workplaces. We are particularly concerned about the occupational safety performance of the construction industry, the food and beverage industry and the container handling industry, as the number of fatalities and accident rate in the construction industry topped all industries; the food and beverage industry recorded the highest number of industrial accidents among all industries; and a number of fatal accidents occurred in the container handling industry up to date in 2014.

Measures to enhance OSH

(I) Construction Industry

9. With the commencement of mega works projects and a large number of maintenance works projects for old buildings in recent years, and in anticipation of the continuous construction boom in the coming years, the construction workforce has increased to around 80 000 in 2013. These developments pose challenges to the occupational safety in the construction industry. In collaboration with the trade associations, workers’ unions, the Construction Industry Council (CIC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC), LD has formulated a set of counter measures to prevent accidents at source. These measures cover the following three areas: stepping up inspection and enforcement action, tackling systemic risks, and enhancing the OSH merit and demerit system.

Stepping up Inspection and Enforcement Action

10. Apart from conducting over 50 000 regular site inspections each year, LD would from time to time launch special enforcement operations to deter work practices contravening work safety requirements, targeting high-risk processes such as lifting operations and work-at-height. LD would take immediate enforcement actions without prior warning upon discovery of breaches of safety legislation. LD has stepped up site inspections and taken vigorous enforcement actions in the past two years. In the special enforcement operations in 2013, LD conducted around 8 000 special site inspections with over 640 prosecutions initiated and more than 340 suspension notices (SNs) and 570 improvement notices (INs) issued. The number of prosecutions taken and enforcement notices issued in 2013 increased by over 100% as compared with 2011. In the first five months of 2014, LD conducted a number of special enforcement operations targeting work-at-height activities and lifting operations in construction industry, with a total of around 200 SNs issued and more than 300 prosecutions to be initiated. In 2014, LD will conduct more special enforcement operations to deter unsafe work-at-height activities and lifting operations.

11. In addition, through strengthening the liaison with major works project proponents, LD urges the contractors concerned to strengthen their site safety management systems in respect of high-risk processes, such as tunnelling works and operation of heavy machinery, through, for example, strengthening the participation of professional resident site staff in monitoring work safety and stepping up safety audits for major works projects so as to eliminate potential work hazards. To curb systemic safety risks at source more effectively, LD would continue to urge contractors and site management personnel to timely incorporate safety elements in the work method statements and design during the project design, tendering and preparatory stages as well as the construction period.

Tackling Systemic Risks

12. LD has strengthened the analysis of underlying systemic risks of serious construction accidents, instituted targeted inspections and enforcement actions, organised seminars on thematic work safety (e.g. work-at-height, electrical work, tunneling works, etc.), and formulated codes of practice on work safety, etc. In view of the spate of serious industrial accidents involving lifting operations in the

first quarter of this year, LD in conjunction with OSHC, trade associations and the lifting professional organisation concerned, organised a “Mobile Crane Operation Safety Seminar” in April this year to urge relevant interested parties to enhance safety measures on lifting operations. These include measures to ensure the stability of lifting appliances, lifting within safe working load and safe operation, as well as proper maintenance and regular inspections, tests and examinations of lifting appliances by competent personnel, etc. LD is reviewing the existing regulatory regime of lifting operations, and would continue to enhance the safety of lifting operations through site inspections.

13. Currently, some sub-contractors use their own planks to erect working platforms on bamboo scaffolds while carrying out works at the external wall, but remove the planks after completing their work processes. As a result, no suitable working platforms would be available for use by sub-contractors of other trades in carrying out subsequent works on bamboo scaffolds, thus endangering their workers’ safety. LD has, in collaboration with CIC, formulated guidelines to delineate the responsibilities among principal contractors and sub-contractors on planking arrangement for providing working platforms on bamboo scaffolds, with a view to ensuring the work safety of workers conducting work on bamboo scaffolds at the external wall. CIC published the new guidelines in the end of May 2014. LD is revising the Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety accordingly, and will urge the industry to adhere to the relevant guidelines and the Code of Practice during the site inspections to be conducted in the second half of this year.

Enhancing the OSH Merit and Demerit System

14. LD strives to enhance the OSH merit and demerit system for the construction industry. Firstly, in order to encourage small-and-medium sized contractors to adopt safe working methods, LD and OSHC jointly launch different sponsorship and safety accreditation schemes. The “OSH Star Enterprise Safety Accreditation Scheme” for the repair, maintenance, alteration and addition (RMAA) industry was launched in June 2012. The Scheme provides small-and-medium sized RMAA contractors with safety training, subsidies for the purchase of fall arresting devices, safety audits and, through collaboration with the insurance sector, offers premium discounts up to 50% to those contractors accredited under the scheme. As at May 2014, OSHC has received 78 applications, and 17 small-and-medium enterprises (SMEs) of the RMAA industry have been accredited. In addition, LD in collaboration with OSHC,

launched a sponsorship scheme in April 2013 encouraging SMEs to purchase mobile working platforms conforming to safety standards, with a view to enhancing work safety in the industry. As at May 2014, OSHC has approved over 1 000 applications, and around 11 500 workers have benefited from the scheme.

15. As to penalty for non-compliance with safety requirements, LD would submit to the court adequate information for reference in sentencing, including serious consequences that may be incurred by the accident in question, the upward trend of the types of accidents concerned, the highest fine imposed for similar cases in the past, etc.; and would request the Department of Justice to consider filing a review or an appeal to the court in respect of the conviction and the penalty when necessary. LD noted that the fines imposed by the court on convicted cases related to fatal industrial accidents in the construction industry increased notably last year as compared to the past.

(II) Food and Beverage Services Sector

16. Regarding the occupational safety of the food and beverage services sector, LD would continue to organise a large-scale territory-wide “Catering Industry Safety Award Scheme” in collaboration with key stakeholders in the industry. In order to further improve the work safety of catering industry practitioners, and encourage the industry to raise tidiness and cleanliness standard at workplaces, OSHC launched the “Outstanding OSH Restaurant – Pilot Scheme on Catering Safety Accreditation” in June 2013. Relevant safety training would be provided to employees of the enterprises participating in the Scheme to enhance their OSH awareness. The enterprises may also participate in the “Accreditation Scheme for Catering Establishments with 5S Good Housekeeping” in order to improve the workplace safety and tidiness and cleanliness standards. Enterprises passing the audits would be awarded OSHC’s “Outstanding OSH Catering Restaurant Certificate”, plus a subsidy up to \$5,000 for purchase of slip resistant shoes and cut resistant gloves in compliance with the safety standards.

17. In addition, LD has produced a new series of TV and radio broadcasts on work safety of the food and beverage services sector, which was launched in February this year. Apart from this, LD has been organizing regular health talks for employers and employees of the industry to enhance their occupational health awareness.

(III) Container Handling Industry

18. LD officers regularly conducted surprise inspections to container terminals, inspecting various work activities at the terminals including the operation of heavy machinery and equipment, cargo handling, etc., to urge duty holders for compliance with OSH legislation. Upon discovery of breaches of law, LD would initiate prosecutions and issue statutory notices. In the first four months this year, LD conducted over 270 inspections to container handling workplaces with two prosecutions to be initiated and 17 SNs/INs issued. In addition, LD has urged the relevant container terminal operators to make improvements on meal break and toilet break arrangements as well as the work arrangements during typhoons or under adverse weather conditions. As a result of LD's intervention, the arrangements in question have been improved, and LD would continue to monitor the implementation of these improvement measures.

19. For publicity and promotion, LD would organise from time to time OSH talks on container handling to enhance the OSH awareness of the industry stakeholders. LD organised an OSH talk for the industry on 29 April 2014, including topics on caring of new workers, traffic control, prevention of musculoskeletal disorders for operators of heavy machinery, analysis of accidents, etc.

Occupational Health Performance

Occupational Diseases

20. In 2013, the number of confirmed cases of occupational diseases was 198, with a decrease by about 29% when compared with 280 cases in 2012. The common occupational diseases included occupational deafness, silicosis and tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm. The relevant statistics are in **Annex 4**.

Occupational Deafness

21. Occupational deafness is a permanent hearing loss arising from at least five to 10 years of exposure to noisy environment at work in the specified occupations. Most of these cases were related to rock grinding, chiselling, cutting or percussion; metal grinding; and working in close proximity to internal combustion engines, turbines or pressurised jet engines. In 2013, there were 65

cases of occupational deafness.

Silicosis

22. Silicosis is a chronic disease with fibrosis of the lungs owing to inhalation of silica dust. Its latent period could be as long as 10 to 20 years. The patients of most cases were construction workers who had exposure to silica dust many years ago, some of whom had been engaged in high-risk hand-dug caisson work. The number of cases of silicosis was 51 in 2013.

Tenosynovitis of the Hand or Forearm

23. Tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm is an occupational musculoskeletal disease. Epidemiological evidence reveals that this disease has strong relationship with certain occupations, i.e. prolonged repetitive actions or excessive force exerted by the hand at work. In 2013, there were 38 cases of tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm, and the patients were services and sales personnel, clerical personnel, elementary workers, etc.

Mesothelioma

24. Mesothelioma is a cancer of the lining of the chest wall caused by inhalation of asbestos, with a latent period as long as 30 to 40 years. In 2013, there were 17 cases of mesothelioma.

Tuberculosis

25. In 2013, there were seven cases of tuberculosis in workers having close and frequent contacts with a relevant source of infection by reason of their employment. These patients included nurses, personal care workers, etc.

Other Occupational Diseases

26. Other occupational diseases in 2013 included five cases of avian chlamydiosis, four cases of compressed air illness, two cases of asbestosis, and two cases of occupational dermatitis.

Promotion Measures of Occupational Health

27. LD promotes employers' and employees' awareness of the prevention of occupational and work-related diseases by organising health talks and seminars, distributing educational publications, broadcasting Announcements in the Public Interest on television and radio, publishing feature articles in newspapers, and showing educational videos on mobile advertising media from time to time. In 2013, LD organised a total of 1 100 health talks on various topics, including occupational health of cleansing workers, manual handling operations and prevention of back injuries, occupational health of professional drivers, occupational stress and occupational health of catering workers, etc., with over 36 000 participants.

28. In conjunction with OSHC, the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board, the Occupational Deafness Compensation Board, employers' associations and workers' unions, LD has been promoting occupational health through various activities including carnivals, occupational health award presentations and experience-sharing sessions, as well as workplace hygiene charter signing, etc.

29. LD collaborated with OSHC, CIC, and relevant employers' associations and workers' unions on the launching of a series of publicity and educational activities from April to September 2013, targeting workplaces with higher risk (e.g. construction sites, outdoor cleansing and horticulture workplaces, kitchens and airport ramp cargo handling areas, etc.) to enhance the awareness of employers and employees on prevention of heat stroke at work. These activities included distributing relevant guidelines and risk assessment checklists, organising health talks, issuing press releases in response to weather conditions, publishing feature articles or broadcasting publicity videos and Announcements in the Public Interest through various media, and conducting promotional visits to outdoor workplaces. Besides, during the same period, LD conducted 30 646 inspections targeting outdoor workplaces with higher risk of heat stroke, and issued 219 warnings and one improvement notice. LD has launched the publicity activities and inspection work in relation to heat stroke prevention since April this year.

30. CIC published an updated guideline in 2013, recommending the industry to give an extra 15-minute rest break in the morning for construction workers from May to September every year. Relevant government departments have incorporated such recommendation in the contracts of government works projects.

LD would, during inspections to construction sites this year, check whether contractors have arranged an extra rest break for workers in accordance with the guideline.

Advice Sought

31. Members are invited to give views on the aforesaid measures.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Labour Department
June 2014

Industrial Accidents in All Workplaces in 2013
- analysed by Industry Section
二零一三年所有工作地點之工業意外個案 - 按行業主類分析

Industry Section 行業主類	2012 二零一二年	2013 二零一三年	Change 增減	Percentage Change 增減率
Agriculture, forestry and fishing 農業、林業及漁業	0	0	---	n.a.
Mining and quarrying 採礦及採石業	0	0	---	n.a.
Manufacturing 製造業	1 944 (1)	1 775 (1)	-169	-8.7%
Electricity, gas and waste management 電力、燃氣及廢棄物管理	85	95 (2)	10	11.8%
Construction 建造業	3 160 (24)	3 232 (22)	72	2.3%
Import/export, wholesale and retail trades 進出口貿易、批發及零售業	0	0	---	n.a.
Transportation, storage, postal and courier services 運輸、倉庫、郵政及速遞服務	939 (2)	784 (3)	-155	-16.5%
Accommodation and food services 住宿及膳食服務	6 216 (1)	5 740	-476	-7.7%
Information and communications 資訊及通訊	13	6	-7	-53.8%
Financing and insurance 金融及保險	0	0	---	n.a.
Real estate 地產	0	0	---	n.a.
Professional and business services 專業及商用服務	0	0	---	n.a.
Public administration, and social and personal services 公共行政以及社會及個人服務	190 (1)	188	-2	-1.1%
Other industries 其他行業	0	0	---	n.a.
TOTAL 總數	12 547 (29)	11 820 (28)	-727	-5.8%

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.
2. Figures in brackets denote the number of fatalities which has also been included in the number of accidents.
3. The above accident figures are recorded as at 27 March 2014.
4. The above statistics are compiled based on the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification Version 2.0.
5. "n.a." means not applicable.

註釋:

1. 工業意外是指在《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。
2. 括號內的數字顯示死亡人數，數字已包括在意外數目內。
3. 上列意外數字為截至 2014 年 3 月 27 日所記錄的數字。
4. 以上的統計數字是按《香港標準行業分類 2.0 版》編製。
5. "n.a." 是指不適用。

Industrial Accidents in Construction Industry in 2013
- analysed by Type of Accident
二零一三年建造業之工業意外個案 - 按意外類別分析

Type of Accident 意外類別	2012 二零一二年	2013 二零一三年	Change 增減
Trapped in or between objects 受困於物件之內或物件之間	114 (1)	133	19
Injured whilst lifting or carrying 提舉或搬運物件時受傷	519	488	-31
Slip, trip or fall on same level 滑倒、絆倒或在同一高度跌倒	719	779	60
Fall of person from height 人體從高處墮下	423 (12)	431 (15)	8
Striking against fixed or stationary object 與固定或不動的物件碰撞	293 (1)	304	11
Striking against or struck by moving object 被移動物件或與移動物件碰撞	548 (2)	602 (2)	54
Stepping on object 踏在物件上	18	6	-12
Exposure to or contact with harmful substance 暴露於有害物質中或接觸有害物質	20	15	-5
Contact with electricity or electric discharge 觸電或接觸放出的電流	17 (7)	10	-7
Trapped by collapsing or overturning object 受困於倒塌或翻側的物件	6	5	-1
Struck by falling object 遭墮下的物件撞擊	56	49 (2)	-7
Struck by moving vehicle 遭移動中的車輛撞倒	12	17 (1)	5
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	234	216	-18
Drowning 遇溺	0	1 (1)	1
Exposure to fire 火警燒傷	7	4	-3
Exposure to explosion 爆炸受傷	4	6	2
Injured by hand tool 被手工具所傷	95	97	2
Injured by fall of ground 泥土傾瀉受傷	4 (1)	2 (1)	-2
Asphyxiation 窒息	0	0	---
Contact with hot surface or substance 觸及灼熱表面或物質	22	12	-10
Injured by animal 被動物所傷	0	0	---
Injured in workplace violence 於工作場所暴力事件中受傷	0	0	---
Others 其他類別	49	55	6
TOTAL 總數	3 160 (24)	3 232 (22)	72

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.
2. Figures in brackets denote the number of fatalities which has also been included in the number of accidents.
3. The above accident figures are recorded as at 27 March 2014.

註釋:

1. 工業意外是指在《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。
2. 括號內的數字顯示死亡人數，數字已包括在意外數目內。
3. 上列意外數字為截至 2014 年 3 月 27 日所記錄的數字。

Industrial Accidents in Food and Beverage Services in 2013
- analysed by Type of Accident

二零一三年餐飲服務業之工業意外個案 - 按意外類別分析

Type of Accident 意外類別	2012 二零一二年	2013 二零一三年	Change 增減
Trapped in or between objects 受困於物件之內或物件之間	71	57	-14
Injured whilst lifting or carrying 提舉或搬運物件時受傷	924	880	-44
Slip, trip or fall on same level 滑倒、絆倒或在同一高度跌倒	1 105	1 026	-79
Fall of person from height 人體從高處墮下	39 (1)	35	-4
Striking against fixed or stationary object 與固定或不動的物件碰撞	680	638	-42
Striking against or struck by moving object 被移動物件或與移動物件碰撞	326	327	1
Stepping on object 踏在物件上	1	1	---
Exposure to or contact with harmful substance 暴露於有害物質中或接觸有害物質	42	47	5
Contact with electricity or electric discharge 觸電或接觸放出的電流	2	3	1
Trapped by collapsing or overturning object 受困於倒塌或翻側的物件	1	0	-1
Struck by falling object 遭墮下的物件撞擊	22	28	6
Struck by moving vehicle 遭移動中的車輛撞倒	19	19	---
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	67	82	15
Drowning 遇溺	0	0	---
Exposure to fire 火警燒傷	8	10	2
Exposure to explosion 爆炸受傷	0	3	3
Injured by hand tool 被手工具所傷	1 400	1 251	-149
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	1 430	1 269	-161
Injured by animal 被動物所傷	16	10	-6
Injured in workplace violence 於工作場所暴力事件中受傷	2	0	-2
Others 其他類別	61	54	-7
TOTAL 總數	6 216 (1)	5 740	-476

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.
2. Figures in brackets denote the number of fatalities which has also been included in the number of accidents.
3. The above accident figures are recorded as at 27 March 2014.

註釋:

1. 工業意外是指在《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。
2. 括號內的數字顯示死亡人數，數字已包括在意外數目內。
3. 上列意外數字為截至 2014 年 3 月 27 日所記錄的數字。

Occupational Diseases in Hong Kong from 2009 to 2013

Occupational disease	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Occupational deafness*	77	70	157	99	65
Silicosis	86	61	63	44	51
Tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm	39	48	70	69	38
Mesothelioma	15	12	13	12	17
Tuberculosis	18	11	17	15	7
Gas poisoning	17	17	11	14	5
Compressed air illness	1	1	3	12	4
Asbestosis	5	1	9	3	2
Occupational dermatitis	10	5	7	3	2
Streptococcus suis infection	0	3	1	1	0
Others	1	1	5	8	7
Total :	268	229	353	280	198

Notes

*: The coverage of compensation under the Occupational Deafness Compensation Ordinance was extended in 2010 to employees suffering from noise-induced monaural hearing loss. In 2013, there were 33 such cases.