

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

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**Panel on Manpower**

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat  
for the meeting on 17 March 2015**

**Work safety of repair, maintenance, alteration and addition works**

**Purpose**

This paper summarises the past discussions by the Panel on Manpower ("the Panel") on work safety of repair, maintenance, alteration and addition ("RMAA") works since the Fourth Legislative Council ("LegCo").

**Background**

2. According to the Administration, with the commencement of a number of mega infrastructure projects in recent years and in anticipation of the continuous construction boom, the construction workforce has been on the rise. For new works projects alone, the number of construction site workers has increased by about 60 % from around 50 000 in 2009 to around 80 000 in 2013. In addition to the development of new buildings, ageing of buildings, which results in continuous growth in repair, maintenance, alteration and addition ("RMAA") works, would pose challenges to work safety.

3. The construction industry records the highest number of fatalities and accident rate among all industries. There were 1 533 accidents in the construction industry in the first half of 2014, up by 6.5% when compared with 1 439 in the same period of 2013. The accident rate per 1 000 workers was 38.7, up by 7.9% when compared with 35.9 in the same period of 2013. The majority (i.e. about 40%) of these accidents involved "slip, trip or fall on same level" and "fall of person from height".

## **Deliberations of the Panel**

### Monitoring and inspection

4. Given that RMAA works were expected to grow phenomenally with the implementation of the mandatory building inspection and window inspection schemes and the provision of government subsidies for owners of dilapidated buildings to carry out building repair and maintenance works, some members considered that the Administration should conduct more regular inspections, apart from surprise inspections, to workplaces to ensure RMAA works contractors' compliance with the relevant safety legislation. Some members also took the view that a heavier penalty should be imposed for repeated non-compliance in order to achieve greater deterrent effect.

5. The Administration advised that apart from conducting regular site inspections each year, the Labour Department ("LD") would from time to time launch special enforcement operations to deter unsafe work practices, with focus on high-risk processes, including work-at-height. LD would take immediate enforcement actions upon discovery of breaches of safety legislation. It would issue improvement notices or suspension notices or initiate prosecutions without prior warning. LD also regularly wrote to construction contractors to keep them posted of the major types of accidents which occurred during the preceding few months at construction work sites and their causes.

### Publicity, promotion and sponsorship scheme

6. According to the Administration, more than half of the construction fatal accidents were related to fall of persons from height. Of these accidents, about 20% involved workers falling from bamboo scaffolds and 20% falling from A-shaped ladders. It was also noticed that in around one-third fall-from-height fatal accidents, workers had fallen from places of work of less than two to three metres high. Thus, LD in collaboration with the Occupational Safety and Health Council ("OSHC") had organised a "Work-at-Height Safety Forum" to explore with the industry measures to enhance work-at-height safety in late April 2013. In addition, to address the risk of work-at-height, including places of work of two to three metres high or less, a sponsorship scheme was launched in 2013 for small-and-medium enterprises ("SMEs") to purchase mobile working platforms for replacement of folding step-ladders. LD and OSHC were considering how to improve the design of mobile working platforms so that working platforms could be used at sites with space constraints.

7. Members were also advised that to address the sector-specific problem, LD in collaboration with OSHC had launched the "OSH Star Enterprise - RMAA Safety Accreditation Scheme" ("the Scheme"), which included

provision of safety training, subsidies for the purchase of fall arresting devices and safety audits for small-and-medium sized RMAA contractors. Scaffolding contractors accredited under the Scheme might obtain premium discounts up to 50% when procuring employees' compensation insurance under the Employees' Compensation Insurance Residual Scheme and the savings in premium ranged from \$300,000 to \$600,000 each year. As at early-March 2014, OSHC had received over 70 applications from SMEs of the RMAA industry and accredited 16 of them.

### Enhancing safety standards

8. Some members expressed concern about fatal accidents arising from carrying out maintenance works at the external walls of buildings. They called on the Administration to take into account the potential work hazards related to building maintenance and truss-out scaffolding works.

9. The Administration advised that LD had published safety guidelines on maintenance works at external walls of buildings and updated the guidelines from time to time in the light of changes in the working environment. LD had, in collaboration with the Construction Industry Council ("CIC"), published the "Guidelines on Planking Arrangement for Providing Working Platforms on Bamboo Scaffolds" in May 2014 with a view to ensuring that suitable working platforms were available for use by workers carrying out works at the external wall. LD also revised the "Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety" ("CoP") in June 2014 accordingly. LD would take into account the aforesaid Guidelines and CoP when enforcing safety regulations relating to the use of bamboo scaffolds for work-at-height.

10. As regards the work safety of erection, dismantling and use of truss-out scaffolds, members were advised that the Administration was highly concerned about the matter and had published suitable safety guides on relevant processes for the industry stakeholders, to remind contractors and workers engaged in such works of the need to ensure occupational safety in order to avoid accidents. LD officers would conduct surprise inspections to work sites of RMAA works involving the use of truss-out scaffolds and other scaffolds during area patrols or upon receiving complaints, to deter unsafe work practices. Taking into account the characteristics of short duration and high mobility of truss-out scaffolding works, the Administration considered that conducting area patrols was an effective mode of enforcement.

11. The Administration further advised that the Committee on Construction Site Safety under CIC had formed a Task Group, comprising members from contractors of the construction industry, relevant organisations, the property management sector, professional bodies and relevant government departments

(including LD and Buildings Department), to follow up on the safety of work-at-height on the external walls of buildings.

**Relevant papers**

12. A list of the relevant papers on the LegCo website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
13 March 2015

## Appendix

### Relevant papers on Work safety of repair, maintenance, alteration and addition works

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Panel on Manpower	21.1.2009 (Item III)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Panel on Manpower	16.7.2009 (Item II)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Panel on Manpower	22.10.2009 (Item III)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Panel on Manpower	21.1.2010 (Item III)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Panel on Manpower	20.5.2010 (Item IV)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Panel on Manpower	20.1.2011 (Item IV)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Panel on Manpower	17.6.2011 (Item IV)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Panel on Manpower	20.6.2012 (Item V)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Panel on Manpower	11.7.2012 (Item IV)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Panel on Manpower	18.12.2012 (Item IV)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Panel on Manpower	25.1.2013 (Item V)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Panel on Manpower	16.4.2013 (Item V)	<a href="#"><u>Agenda</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Minutes</u></a>
Panel on Manpower	19.11.2013 (Item V)	<a href="#"><u>Agenda</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Minutes</u></a>
Panel on Manpower	17.12.2013 (Item V)	<a href="#"><u>Agenda</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Minutes</u></a>
Panel on Manpower	15.4.2014 (Item IV)	<a href="#"><u>Agenda</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Minutes</u></a>
Legislative Council	16.4.2014	<a href="#"><u>Official Record of Proceedings</u></a> <a href="#"><u>(Question 6)</u></a>
Panel on Manpower	17.6.2014 (Item V)	<a href="#"><u>Agenda</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Minutes</u></a>
Panel on Manpower		<a href="#"><u>LC Paper No.</u></a> <a href="#"><u>CB(2)1836/13-14(01)</u></a>
Panel on Manpower	18.11.2014 (Item IV)	<a href="#"><u>Agenda</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Minutes</u></a>

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