

For information on
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LegCo Panel on Manpower

Occupational Safety Performance of Hong Kong in 2004

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on Hong Kong's occupational safety performance in 2004.

Background

2. The Labour Department seeks to enhance occupational safety through legislation, law enforcement, promotion, education and training.

3. Through the concerted efforts of all parties concerned, including employers, employees, contractors, safety practitioners and the Government, Hong Kong's safety performance has been improving in recent years, with the number and rate of occupational accidents falling steadily.

4. However, this pattern changed somewhat in 2004. The overall number and rate of occupational accidents rose slightly as compared with that of 2003. The increase was mainly attributed to the rebound of the local economy in the period that generated more economic and business activities as compared with the drastic economic downturn brought about by the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in early 2003. As a result, the year of 2003 provided a significantly lower base for comparison. Nonetheless, comparing the figures of 2004 with those of 2002, which was a normal year, there was a sustained improvement in the overall performance. It is particularly noteworthy that despite a slight increase in the overall occupational injuries in 2004, the safety performance of the construction industry continued to make notable improvement.

Recent Statistics

Occupational injuries

5. Compared with 2003, the number of occupational injuries in all workplaces in 2004 stood at 44 025, representing an increase of 4.8%, while the injury rate per 1 000 employees increased slightly from 17.7 to 18.1, up by 2.6%. However, compared with 2002, the number of occupational injuries fell by 6.4% and the injury rate dropped by 5.7%. Moreover, comparing the occupational injury figures of 2004 to those of the previous years, a decreasing trend since 2000 is still maintained. (Please see Table 1)

(Table 1) Occupational Injuries in All Workplaces

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004 (compared with 2003)	2004 (compared with 2002)
Fatal	199	176	210	171	187 (+9.4%)	187 (-11.0%)
Non-fatal	57 893	53 543	46 813	41 851	43 838 (+4.7%)	43 838 (-6.4%)
Total	58 092	53 719	47 023	42 022	44 025 (+4.8%)	44 025 (-6.4%)
Injury Rate/1 000 employees	23.3	21.6	19.2	17.7	18.1 (+2.6%)	18.1 (-5.7%)

6. In 2004, the catering industry, transport and related services, business services and wholesale and retail trade all recorded some increases in their accident figures. Nevertheless, these accidents were mostly of a minor nature and were mainly due to the unsafe use of hand tools, accidental contact with hot surface or substance, incorrect manual lifting or carrying and slip or trip on the same level.

Industrial accidents

7. The number of industrial accidents for all sectors in 2004 stood at 17 533. This represented a slight increase of 1.6% compared with 2003. The accident rate per 1 000 employees increased slightly from

31.3 in 2003 to 31.5 in 2004, up by 0.6%. However, compared with 2002, the number of industrial accidents fell by 21.9% and the injury rate dropped by 15.7%. Moreover, comparing the industrial accident figures of 2004 to those of the previous years, a decreasing trend since 2000 is still maintained. (Please see Table 2)

(Table 2) Industrial Accidents in All Sectors

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004 (compared with 2003)	2004 (compared with 2002)
Fatal	43	34	25	28	24 (-14.3%)	24 (-4.0%)
Non-fatal	33 609	28 484	22 428	17 221	17 509 (+1.7%)	17 509 (-21.9%)
Total	33 652	28 518	22 453	17 249	17 533 (+1.6%)	17 533 (-21.9%)
Accident Rate/1 000 employees	51.7	44.6	37.4	31.3	31.5 (+0.6%)	31.5 (-15.7%)

8. Of the 24 industrial fatalities in 2004, 17 occurred on construction sites, while the remainder was in manufacturing and other establishments. Causes included fall of persons from height (10 cases), striking against or struck by moving object (5 cases), struck by falling objects (4 cases), trapped in or between objects (2 cases), contact with electricity or electric discharge (1 case), trapped by collapsed or overturning object (1 case) and struck by moving vehicle (1 case). The figure of industrial fatalities in 2004 hit a historically low record.

Accidents in the construction industry

9. The safety performance of the high-risk construction industry has continued to improve. However, it still has the highest number of fatalities and accident rate. The number of industrial accidents in the construction industry decreased from 4 367 in 2003 to 3 833 in 2004, down by 12.2%. The accident rate per 1 000 employees fell from 68.1 in 2003 to 60.3 in 2004, down by 11.4%. Compared with 2002, the number of accidents showed a hefty drop of 38.6% whilst the injury rate went down by 29.2%. Moreover, the accident figures and accident rates

in the construction industry have been decreasing since 2000. (Please see Table 3)

(Table 3) Industrial Accidents in the Construction Industry

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004 (compared with 2003)	2004 (compared with 2002)
Fatal	29	28	24	25	17 (-32.0%)	17 (-29.2%)
Non-fatal	11 896	9 178	6 215	4 342	3 816 (-12.1%)	3 816 (-38.6%)
Total	11 925	9 206	6 239	4 367	3 833 (-12.2%)	3 833 (-38.6%)
Accident Rate/1 000 employees	149.8	114.6	85.2	68.1	60.3 (-11.4%)	60.3 (-29.2%)

10. The causes of the 17 fatalities were fall of person from height (8 cases), struck by falling objects (3 cases), striking against or struck by moving object (3 cases), trapped in or between objects (1 case), contact with electricity or electric discharge (1 case) and trapped by collapsed or overturning object (1 case).

Accidents in the catering industry

11. The number of industrial accidents in the catering industry was higher than that in other industries. The number of industrial accidents increased from 8 527 in 2003 to 9 410 in 2004, up by 10.4%, while the accident rate per 1 000 employees increased from 49.6 in 2003 to 51.5 in 2004, up by 3.8%. However, compared with 2002, the number of accidents and the injury rate fell by 7.3% and 6.0% respectively. Moreover, comparing the accident figures of 2004 to those of previous years, a decreasing trend since 2000 is still maintained. (Please see Table 4)

(Table 4) Industrial Accidents in the Catering Industry

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004 (compared with 2003)	2004 (compared with 2002)
Fatal	2	0	0	0	0 (---)	0 (---)
Non-fatal	12 619	11 914	10 149	8 527	9 410 (+10.4%)	9 410 (-7.3%)
Total	12 621	11 914	10 149	8 527	9 410 (+10.4%)	9 410 (-7.3%)
Accident Rate/1 000 employees	66.2	61.5	54.7	49.6	51.5 (+3.8%)	51.5 (-6.0%)

The Way Forward

12. Despite the improvements in safety performance, the Labour Department will continue to keep up its efforts to reduce the work accident toll and to ensure that both employers and employees are aware of the importance of maintaining safety and health at work.

Labour Department
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