

**Panel on Manpower
List of follow-up actions**

Government's response

Item 8: Occupational disease and occupational health in 2020

The initiatives taken by the Occupational Deafness Compensation Board and the Occupational Safety and Health Council to promote awareness on prevention of occupational deafness and exposure to noise hazard at work

In order to raise the awareness of employers and employees engaged in noisy industries as well as that of the general public on prevention of occupational deafness and noise hazard at work, the Occupational Deafness Compensation Board (ODCB) and Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) have been carrying out a series of educational and promotional activities every year. The main events are listed as follows:

(a) ODCB

- (i) Organising a kick-off ceremony on promoting occupational deafness prevention, followed by roving exhibitions at various districts in Hong Kong;
- (ii) Promoting hearing conservation through TV, radio, newspapers and public transport systems (including MTR and buses), with the social media added as a publicity channel in recent years;
- (iii) Collaborating with major occupational safety and health (OSH) organisations to organise large scale annual events, including the “Hearing Conservation Best Practices Award” co-organised with OSHC to recognise organisations with outstanding achievements in protecting the hearing of workers, and jointly organising with the Labour Department (LD) and other OSH organisations the “Construction Industry Safety Award Scheme”, “Catering Industry Safety Award Scheme”, “Construction Safety Forum”, etc.;
- (iv) Setting up the Labour Group Activities Sponsorship Program to encourage trade unions and labour groups to publicise the Occupational Deafness Compensation Scheme (ODCS) and hearing conservation messages in their activities, which can reach out to tens of thousands of

workers every year with many being engaged in industries of high noise levels;

- (v) Organising safety visits and induction talks at workplaces with work processes of high noise levels, and working together with major trade unions related to noisy industries on special promotional campaigns to publicise preventive measures against noise hazards and explain the details of ODCS to workers;
- (vi) Periodically dispatching mobile audiometric buses and audiologists to various noisy workplaces to conduct free preliminary hearing assessments for workers and distribute promotional kits on hearing protection with earplugs as educational tools, and providing immediate assistance and recommendations to tested workers with hearing problems detected; and
- (vii) Co-organising a free “Managing Noise at Work” course with OSHC and providing sponsorship to encourage suitable personnel to join OSHC’s “Certificate of Competence in Workplace Noise Assessment” course, thus ensuring that employers have qualified staff to help carry out the work on prevention of occupational deafness.

(b) OSHC

- (i) Co-organising the “Occupational Health Award” with ODCB, the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board, LD and the Department of Health, under which the “Hearing Conservation Best Practices Award” is presented to recognise organisations that have outstanding performance in workplace noise control and protecting workers’ hearing;
- (ii) Co-organising the “Managing Noise at Work” course with ODBC to enhance the understanding of employers and management staff on noise hazards at work and their legal duties, the principles and measures of noise control and hearing protection, as well as occupational deafness compensation scheme, etc. This course is suitable for employers and management staff, particularly those engaged in industries with noisy work processes;
- (iii) Organising the “Certificate of Competence in Workplace Noise Assessment” course which aims to train participants in the effective performance of noise assessment at workplace, collection and analyses of noise data, thus enabling employers to comply with legal requirements related to noise at work. The course is recognised by LD,

and those have completed the course successfully are qualified to carry out noise assessments; and

- (iv) Co-organising the course fee subsidy scheme for the “Certificate of Competence in Workplace Noise Assessment” with ODCB. Hong Kong citizens who have successfully completed the training and obtained the course certificate will have their course fees subsidised by ODCB.