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Panel on Manpower

**Information note prepared by
the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 18 October 2022**

Policies and measures to improve the occupational safety on construction sites

According to the Administration, the Labour Department (“LD”) has long been working in close partnership with related organizations such as the Occupational Safety and Health Council, the Construction Industry Council, trade associations, workers’ unions, professional bodies and other government bureaux/departments to foster occupational safety and health (“OSH”) across various sectors, including and in particular the construction industry, through enforcement, promotion and publicity.

2. With the concerted efforts of various sectors of the community, Hong Kong’s overall OSH performance has been improving continuously in recent years. However, the OSH performance of the construction industry continues to call for attention as fatal or serious industrial accidents still occur from time to time in large-scale government/private construction projects or small-scale repair and maintenance works over the past years. According to information provided by the Administration in June 2022, in 2021, there were 3 109 industrial accidents¹ involving 23 fatalities² in the construction industry. The accident rate per 1 000 workers was 29.5. The number of fatal industrial accidents and the accident rate per 1 000 workers of the construction industry were the highest among all industries in 2021.

¹ The accidents categorized by types were mainly: “slip, trip or fall on same level” (818 cases), “injured whilst lifting or carrying” (616 cases), “striking against or struck by moving object” (284 cases), “striking against fixed or stationary object” (283 cases) and “fall of person from height” (263 cases).

² The 23 industrial fatalities in the construction industry in 2021 involved “persons falling from height” (eight cases), “Asphyxiation” (four cases), “trapped by collapsing or overturning object” (three cases), “striking against or struck by moving object” (three cases), “trapped in or between objects” (two cases), “struck by falling object” (two cases) and “striking against fixed or stationary object” (one case). Among the eight fatalities involving “persons falling from height”, two cases involved falling from bamboo scaffolding, two cases from windows, one case from ladder, one case from working platform/falsework, one case from fragile structure and one case from unfenced edges.

3. According to statistics available on the website of LD³, in the first quarter of 2022, the number of industrial accidents in the construction industry was 516, involving two fatalities.

4. The spate of serious and fatal industrial accidents in the construction industry occurred in recent months (including a particularly severe accident that happened at a construction site in Sau Mau Ping on 7 September 2022, in which a tower crane collapsed resulting in the death of three workers and injury of six others⁴) had aroused widespread public concern over the OSH performance of the construction industry. On 29 September 2022, The Ombudsman announced the launch of a direct investigation to examine the Government's regulation of OSH in the construction industry⁵. At the Panel's request, the Administration will brief the Panel on the policies and measures to improve the occupational safety on construction sites at the meeting on 18 October 2022.

Council Business Division 2
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³ The statistics can be accessed from the following link in LD's website:
<https://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/osh/content10.htm>

⁴ Please refer to the press release issued by LD for the fatal work accident occurred on 7 September 2022:
<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202209/07/P2022090700711.htm>

⁵ Please refer to the relevant press release on the direct investigation launched by The Ombudsman:
<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202209/29/P2022092900292.htm>