

Construction Industry Council
1st Progress Report of Committee on Construction Site Safety

Purpose

This paper outlines the main points discussed at the 1st meeting of the Committee on Construction Site Safety held on 28 May 2007. The record of attendance is at Annex A.

Issues Discussed

(A) *Terms of reference and Membership*

2. Members endorsed the membership and terms of reference for the Committee at Annex B and noted that they would cover research on site safety. The co-opted members would be invited to attend all meetings of the Committee whom could consider their need for attending having regard to the relevance of the agenda to their interest and expertise. While a suggestion had been made for co-opting members affiliated with small and medium size developers, it was concluded that the agreed membership should be adequate for effective communication with developers of various sizes.

3. While co-opted members would join the Committee on personal basis instead of being representatives of their affiliated organizations, there could be cases in which co-opted members could no longer contribute meaningfully to the discussions of the Committee after their departure from their affiliated organizations. In such cases, consideration could be given to co-opting suitable replacements to ensure that the Committee could continue to have access to the required expertise.

(B) *Priority Tasks*

4. Members agreed to pursue the priority tasks listed at Annex C and expressed views on the way forward.

5. On the safety of repair and maintenance (R&M) works, fall from height accounted for 64% of the fatalities associated with R&M works in 2005 and a substantial number of these cases resulted from lack of suitable anchorages for safety belts. High priority should be accorded to development and provision of transportable temporary anchorage devices and educating workers to use them when necessary. The long-term

solution would be the provision of suitable design features in new buildings (such as permanent anchorage points) to enhance the safety of R&M works. Members therefore agreed to form an informal task force to expedite the priority tasks of improving safety of R&M works and incorporation of safety features in building design. Property management companies should also be urged to make more efforts in assuring the adoption of appropriate site safety measures for R&M works carried out on the properties under their management. Furthermore, as the experience of other economies showed that improper design of the buildings and infrastructures could lead to site accidents, the Committee agreed to investigate how site accidents could be reduced through improving the design of permanent works having regard to the relevant principles of the UK Construction (Design and Management) Regulations.

6. Members decided to pursue the promotion of adoption of Pay-for-Safety scheme in private sector projects as one of the priority tasks for the Committee so as to complement the Safety Partnering Programme launched by REDA and HKCA in June 2005.

7. LD tabled the fatal accident figures for 2007 (up to 28 May) and a summary of the 12 fatal accidents that occurred in 2007. In one of these accidents, a worker working on a demolition site was struck by a reversing excavator. Given the number of fatal accidents caused by site vehicles, LD was asked to consider introducing legislative provisions mandating the installation of closed-circuit television (CCTV) to provide drivers of site vehicles and construction plant operators with the rear side view while they were reversing.

8. There were several other fatal accidents associated with demolition works including one in which a worker demolishing a two-storey building adjacent to a temple was killed when the slab on which he was standing collapsed. BD advised that the demolition works were executed without seeking prior consent and approval in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance. BD was urged to educate the public on the requirement to seek proper approval and consent for demolition works. Consideration should also be given to drawing the attention of the public to the need to appoint qualified persons to supervise and carry out demolition works. Members note that the Minor Works Control Regime would cover small-scale demolition works so as to exercise more effective control.

Further Actions

9. The following further actions were agreed –
- (a) Upon endorsement of the membership of the Committee by CIC, the Secretariat would issue letters inviting co-opted members and Government's representatives to join the Committee and attend future meetings;
 - (b) An informal task force would be formed to take forward the tasks of improving safety of R&M works and incorporation of features in the design of buildings to enhance the safety of R&M works;
 - (c) LD would consider and brief the Committee on the way forward on the introduction of statutory requirement mandating installation of CCTV to provide site vehicle drivers and construction plant operators with the rear side view when they were reversing; and
 - (d) BD would consider and brief the Committee on the measures for enhancing the safety of demolition works including educating the public on the requirement to seek proper approval and consent for demolition works.

**CIC Secretariat
June 2007**

Committee on Construction Site Safety

**1st Meeting held at 2:30 pm on 28 May 2007
in Conference Room 1201, Murray Building**

Record of Attendance

Present

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Mr Thomas Kwok | Chairman |
| Mr James Blake | |
| Mr CHOI Chun-wa | |
| Mr Thomas Ho | |
| Prof KO Jan-ming | |
| Mr Edgar Kwan | |
| Mr WAN Koon-sun | |
| Mr H W Cheung | Director of Buildings |

In Attendance

| | |
|------------|---|
| Dr Alex Li | Environment, Transport and Works Bureau |
| Mr S H Tso | Labour Department |

Construction Industry Council Secretariat

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|-----------------|--|
| Ms Janet Wong | Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Works) 1 |
| Mr Jack Chan | Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Works) 1 |
| Mr K H Tao | Chief Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Works) 1 |
| Mr Solomon Wong | Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Works) Public Works Systems Administration 1 |

Construction Industry Council
Committee on Construction Site Safety

Chairman - Mr Thomas Kwok

Members

• CIC Members

- Mr James Blake
- Mr CHOI Chun-wa
- Mr Thomas Ho
- Prof KO Jan-ming
- Mr Edgar Kwan
- Mr WAN Koon-sun
- Director of Buildings

• Co-opted Members

- Mr C K Tsang - The Hong Kong Federation of Electrical and Mechanical Contractors
- Mr NG Kwok-kwan - Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees' General Union
- Mr Anthony Chan – Hong Kong Construction Association
- Mr CHAN Dick-sang, Philip – Hong Kong Institute of Architects
- Mr PANG Long - Hong Kong Construction Site Workers General Union
- Mr William Sui – Hong Kong Bar-Bending Contractors Association
- Mr YU Koon-ching – Hong Kong Safety Supervisors Association
- Mr Gordon Cho – Construction Industry Training Authority
- Mr TANG Wah-sing – Occupational Safety and Health Council
- Mr Dominic Lam – Hong Kong Federation of Insurers
- Mr LAU Chi-keung – Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong
- Prof. Francis Wong – Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- Ms Ada Fung – Housing Department

- Government's Representatives

- Dr Alex Li - Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
- Mr S H Tso - Labour Department
- Mr C C Chan – Buildings Department
- Mr Ros Lam – Office of the Commissioner of Insurance

Terms of Reference

1. To review and monitor site safety performance of the construction industry.
2. To identify and recommend measures for improving safety performance to CIC.
3. To promote adoption of the improvement measures by the industry.

Committee on Construction Site Safety
Priority Tasks

| Priority | Issue | Background | Follow Up Actions |
|----------|---|--|--|
| High | 1. Safety of repair and maintenance (R&M) works | Despite the continuous improvement in the industry's overall safety performance, a growing share of site accidents has been taken up by R&M works. In particular, accidents associated with working at height stood out as a major source of concern because of their serious consequences. The Working Group on Construction Site Safety and Employees' Compensation Insurance of the former Provisional Construction Industry Co-ordination Board (PCICB) had conducted extensive discussions on the issue and suggested a list of follow-up actions including accelerating introduction of the Minor Works Control System, conducting thorough review of the regulatory regime, tightening enforcement actions and strengthening education and promotion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee to further consider the measures for improving the safety of R&M works. |
| High | 2. Measures for tackling other common causes of fatal accidents | While fall from height is the dominant cause of fatal accidents, there are other common causes of fatal accidents which need to be addresses. Examples include accidents associated with site vehilces and accidents resulting from lack of proper safety measures in demolition works. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee to identify the other common causes of fatal accidents and propose improvement measures. |

| Priority | Issue | Background | Follow Up Actions |
|----------|--|--|--|
| High | 3. Site safety training for construction personnel | The PCICB Working Group on Construction Site Safety and Employees' Compensation Insurance had conducted a thorough review of the safety training provisions for construction personnel and recommended improvement measures including tightening the control on providers of green card courses, mandating silver card training for risk-prone trades through contractual provisions and improving safety training for front-line supervisors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee to follow-up on the measures recommended by the PCICB Working Group and consider further improvements. |
| Medium | 4. Incorporation of features in the design of buildings to enhance the safety of repair and maintenance operations | The incorporation of design features to enhance the safety or repair and maintenance operations was raised at the 30 th PCICB meeting on 11 August 2006 in considering the findings of Construction Industry Institute – Hong Kong's research on safety of working at height. At the 31 st meeting on 17 November 2006, Buildings Department (BD) submitted a paper highlighting the safety features that are promulgated through PNAP 218 for voluntary adoption by AP/RSE. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee to consider ways for promoting incorporation of design features for enhancing the safety of repair and maintenance operations. |
| Medium | 5. Adoption of Pay-for-Safety Scheme in private sector projects | <p>REDA and HKCA jointly conceived a Safety Partnering Programme aimed at improving private sector safety performance by introducing measures tried out successfully in public works projects, in particular the Pay-for-Safety Scheme.</p> <p>The Programme was formally launched in June 2005 with the signing of a Safety Partnership Charter by REDA and HKCA. By early 2007, 30 sites belonging to five developers have participated voluntarily in the programme.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee to collaborate with REDA and HKCA to further promote adoption of Pay-for-Safety Scheme for private sector projects. The Committee to consider imposing the requirement for Pay-for-Safety scheme through legislation if promotion efforts do not yield the desired results. |

| Priority | Issue | Background | Follow Up Actions |
|----------|---|--|---|
| Medium | 6. CIRC Recommendation 20 – Voluntary registration scheme for renovation contractors and decorators | As PCICB did not have the capacity to operate another registration scheme in addition to the Voluntary Subcontractor Registration Scheme, this recommendation will be taken up by CIC. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee to consider the need for the proposed registration scheme taking into account the Minor Works Control System being taken forward by BD. |
| Medium | 7. Reduction of site accidents through improving design of permanent works | Since the experience of other economies shows that improper design of buildings and infrastructure could lead to site accidents, it will be worthwhile to investigate how site accidents could be reduced through improving the design of permanent works having regard to the relevant principles of the UK Construction (Design and Management) Regulations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee to consider how site accidents could be reduced through improving the design of permanent works. |

| Priority | Issue | Background | Follow Up Actions |
|----------|--|---|---|
| Medium | 8. Insurance of self-employed construction workers | <p>An accident occurred in early April 2007 in which a self-employed worker was killed during the course of demolishing an old building in Tsuen Wan. As the deceased was self-employed, he was not covered by employees' compensation (EC) insurance.</p> <p>As noted in the discussion of the PCICB Working Group on Construction Site Safety and Employees' Compensation Insurance, construction workers may be asked to declare themselves as self-employed for various reasons. Aiming to ensure the provision of proper EC insurance cover for genuine construction workers who might declare themselves as self-employed, the PCICB Working Group had worked with Labour Department to clarify the common factors considered by the court in deciding the employment status of injured workers. The Hong Kong Federation of Insurers had also revised the code of best practice for EC insurers advising them to have regard not only to Mandatory Provident Fund records but to all other relevant circumstances in handling claim cases.</p> <p>Since genuinely self-employed are not employees, their insurance coverage was outside the ambit of the PCICB Working Group. However, HKFI had briefed the Working Group on an option whereby main contractors may procure insurance covers for these persons through paying additional premium for third party liability insurance amounting to about 0.5 to 1% of the contract sum. However, main contractors may not be keen on this option, since they are not under any obligations to insure for genuinely self-employed persons. In the light of the unfortunate accident, the Committee may need to consider the insurance arrangements for genuinely self-employed construction workers.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee to consider the insurance arrangements for genuinely self-employed construction workers |