



Occupational Health



The commitment by
the LegCo election candidates to support
the reform of OHS policy in HK

Occupational Health Education

▶ **Review of Major Worker's Health Incidents**

Deadly industrial accident at International Commercial Centre in 2009

Rehabilitation

▶ **Return to work for injured workers**

Please vote for these Legislative Council election candidates

The election for the new Legislative Council was held on 9th September. In order to promote the development of occupational health policies in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Workers' Health Centre (henceforth HKWHC) sorted out the important initiatives that we have promoted in the improvement of local occupational health and safety (OHS) policies in the past years. We sent these to the candidates of the LegCo, requesting their stance on whether they support the improvement of Hong Kong's OHS policies, and requiring them to list such initiatives into their political program. Finally, we created a list of those willing to support the improvement of OHS for the reference of our readers.

We hope that those candidates, if successful in entering the LegCo, can actively pay attention to OHS problems in Hong Kong.

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The commitment by the LegCo election candidates to support the reform of OHS policy in HK

The 2012 LegCo election was held at 9th September. In order to promote the awareness and concern towards Hong Kong OHS policies and measures among the candidates, we selected 5 main points from the occupational health prevention and rehabilitation policies that we have always been proposing. We collected suggestions and feedback from various political parties and candidates; the main points include:

Occupational Health Prevention

(1) Prevention of asbestosis

With the redevelopment projects in the northern New Territories and continuous redevelopment & maintenance works in old buildings in urban districts, the government should take the initiative to monitor whether the demolition processes are in accordance with law and use appropriate methods. They should not take passive action after receiving a complaint; it is crucial to prevent the release of asbestos fibers in the destruction of asbestos-containing materials in old buildings, which will damage the health of workers and the general public.

(2) Legionnaires' Disease

The mandatory risk assessment of high-risk premises should be legislated. Water samples from appliances should be collected and tested in order to minimize the risks of contracting Legionella. All employees in the premises should be included in the occupational disease protection category for compensation, not only those in charge of repair, maintenance and operation of the water cooling systems and hot water systems.

(3) Occupational Health under Hot Weather

The government should legislate the arrangements for "Prevention of heat stroke for work under hot environments". At the same time, promotion and education should be strengthened to make employees and employers cooperate to better arrange various prevention measures, taking an active role in controlling the risks of diseases due to a hot working environment.

Rehabilitation from Work Injury

- (1) A reform of the current employee compensation system is needed in order to change the over-reliance on the public health care sector for rehabilitation. Multi-disciplinary rehabilitation schemes with no conflicts of interest should be introduced. The responsibility and participation of employers in helping the injured worker return to society and work can be increased through disability management.
- (2) The Labour Department should take up a more active role in establishing a professional team to assist, deal with, follow up and coordinate the compensation problems and rehabilitation concerns faced by occupationally injured workers in returning to work, ensuring that the work injury problems can be appropriately dealt with according to the law.

We sent out invitation letters to all candidate lists or individual candidates whose contacts we could get hold of in the beginning of August 2012, regardless of whether the candidate has already been automatically elected. We requested their reply of whether they supported the 5 points above and whether they would list them in their political programmes.

Summarizing the statistics:

Total number of election candidate lists and candidates: 127

Invitation letters sent: 110

Candidate lists and candidates which we do not have contact methods: 17

Final responses from the candidates:

1. 42 candidates or lists replied that they would support all the points
2. Candidates from Liberal Parties & Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong replied that they needed time to discuss & consider & did not indicate whether they would support or not.
3. For those candidates who were uncontested, we had sent out 15 invitations with null reply.

We hope that the above information to allow people concerned with occupational health policies and issues as a reference on LegCo election. After the election we will keep follow up on their commitment to reform of OHS policy in HK.

Promoting social concern for the Occupational Health Issues of security workers in the property management industry

To learn more about the work conditions and occupational health state of security workers in Hong Kong, including physical and psychological health and related occupational health issues, the Hong Kong Housing Management Employees Union (“the Union”) worked with the Workers’ Health Centre to conduct a study during November and December 2010 to investigate, using a scientific approach, the actual occupational health state of Hong Kong security workers. The study aims to achieve better public understanding and concern for occupational safety and to promote the occupational health standards for industry professionals. It aims also to proposing practicable suggestions to positively encourage employers to improve the occupational health standards in the industry, and take corporate social responsibility.

This study has adopted the methodology of “Participatory Action Research”. Through questionnaires and case interviews, the study aims to learn more about the occupational health of security staff of property management industry in Hong Kong. Targeting the issues discovered from the study and from various interview cases, here are some suggestions:

1. Reviewing existing guidelines and regulations in light of the industry situation, while reinforcing the exercise of relevant laws. The existing industry guidelines and regulations have failed to cover all the issues faced by frontline workers. There are major loopholes. Therefore, we suggest that the Security and Guarding Services Industry Authority (the Authority) should speed up the reviewing of the existing system to keep up with social changes and the industrial developments. Meanwhile, the Authority should also come up with more practicable guidelines and regulations to protect workers from the occupational health issues they face. To more effectively solicit opinions from workers so that the system better fulfils real needs, it is suggested that the policy making process should include a higher proportion of union involvement and views, so that they may voice their opinions regarding occupational health of their fellow industrial workers in a Participatory Model. Also, targeting the absence of legal binding effect in the existing system, it is suggested that judiciary and law enforcement powers be included in the system to enhance the legal effect of the relevant regulations.

2. Include occupational health and safety measures and their actual implementation as part of the license assessment process for security companies. Targeting the existing lack of awareness in promoting occupational health and safety in the company level, it is suggested that the Authority include occupational health and safety measures and their actual implementation as part of the license assessment process for security companies, targeting in particular work-related muscle strain and mental stress issues, to directly safeguard the occupational health of the staff. Meanwhile, the Authority should also enforce checks and monitoring for these regulations, for example conducting spot-checks on the management of various frontline service units, issuing warnings or even persecutions to offenders, to ensure effective policy implementation. It is also suggested that the Authority should set up a 24-hour public hotline to cater to the irregular work hours of industry workers so that both employees and the public may file anonymous complaints against security companies, and promote industry regulation.

3. Set up short breaks and stretch exercises for frontline workers. Various international reports have indicated that short breaks are helpful to alleviating and reducing the occurrence of muscle strain. We thus suggest that employers to implement break arrangements for various work units. Consolidating comments from our interviews, one 5 to 10 minute break is sufficient for relaxation. This not only entails physical relief, but also offers respite from the mental stress brought by work. Given that the industry has ample operational experience in this area, it is advisable to add the practice to the regulations to further protect the health of workers at all levels, while ensuring employees be sufficiently rested. The employer may also take the break time to engage in joint stretching exercises with the staff to alleviate bodily discomfort and reduce the occurrence and severity of muscle strain.

4. Add employee participatory elements to the existing management system of occupational health and safety. Through this study, from both the quantitative questionnaires and the interviews, we discover that frontline workers think and feel rather negatively about their work situation. We believe this is caused not only by the stress from work itself but by the employees' lack of control over their own work. From the study, we found that the interviewed workers have a clear need for improvements in occupational health and safety in their workplace, as well as proper information in the area; they also have certain thoughts and suggestions as to how they could protect their own bodies against strain and harm. We suggest that the employers add such internationally-recognized sustainable element to their existing occupational health and safety system, so that frontline workers may share their views through open channels and propose low-cost, effective suggestions with the policy makers in the formulation and implementation stages. This will not only promote a sense of belonging and engagement for frontline workers, but also minimize loss of resources and time from re-planning due to policy implementation issues or deviations, while directly promoting work efficacy in various service units.

We urge the relevant authorities and employers to take note of the occupational health issues faced by security workers in the property management industry and consider the above suggestions, and offer fundamental protection to the occupational health of frontline security workers.

Review of Major Worker's Health Incidents - Deadly industrial accident at International Commercial Centre in 2009

Beginning from last year, the Centre has been combing through the past major industrial accidents in Hong Kong to conduct preliminary analysis and investigate the causes and repercussions of three major industrial accidents related to industrial chemicals, and how one may promote the enactment/amendment of regulations on safe use of chemicals. Looking back, apart from industrial chemicals, the construction industry is also a source of major industrial accidents. With the launch of major infrastructural projects in recent years, fatal industrial accidents in construction worksites have soared in number. To arouse public awareness in the occupational health and safety of the industry workers, we shall focus on construction industry accidents and look into the details of several major construction accidents. The accident involving a collapsed platform over an elevator shaft that happened in 2009 was one of the most severe fatal industrial accidents in recent years, which took the lives of 6 workers. In this issue, we shall explore the accident in its entirety and investigate its social repercussions.



On 13 September 2009, at the 118-storey International Commercial Centre (ICC) – tallest building in Hong Kong and the 4th tallest around the world – an industrial accident happened where 6 workers fell down an elevator shaft and was killed. The scene of the accident was an elevator shaft located on the 30th floor. As the elevator had yet to be installed, it was used as a rubbish chute to collect construction refuse. The temporary work platform was constructed by bamboo scaffolding, and has an opening at the centre to facilitate the discarding of construction waste down the chute. ^[1] During work hours, the scaffolding collapsed under the weight of the 6 workers working on it, and the workers, together with over one tonne of waste, fell to the bottom of the chute at 10th floor, breaking through a work platform on the 27th floor in the process. ^[2] The 6 workers were buried in the clutter. Because of the tight area of the location (only 6 sq. metres), and that there was only one exit to the chute, the search and rescue operations were immensely difficult. It was only possible to dig by hand using simple tools like shovels. ^[3] The fire services even called upon the help of the special rescue team formed after the Sichuan Earthquake and used life detectors to help with the rescue. Finally, after 5 hours, the fire services team rescued all 6 workers but unfortunately they were all declared dead on site.

Occupational Health Education

After the severe industrial accident, a 6-person taskforce was charged with investigating the cause of the accident. The report pointed out that: (1) the chief contractor and the sub-contractor had violated the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance in their neglect to provide workers with installations and work systems that poses no harm to their health and safety, for example safety belts have not been provided to the deceased workers before they began work. ^[5] ^[6] (2) The contractors have also violated the Construction Sites (Safety) Regulation. A work platform built by bamboo scaffolding is an improper facility; the contractor has failed to provide a safety work platform to workers. ^[6] The Coroner's Court has confirmed that the 6 workers died of accident, and the Labour Department, after consulting the Department of Justice, issued 48 court summons to the chief contractor and 17 and 18 summons respectively to two sub-contractors. Later, the three contractors involved pled guilty to 49 charges and was fined a total HK\$1.4 million. ^[7]

The accident caused widespread social concern and repercussions. Various organizations issued commentaries and proposals for improving safety standards. The Labour Department also launched a special enforcement action targeting elevator shaft safety and conducted checks at various major worksites. Also, the Construction Industry Council also issued two safety guidelines regarding elevator shaft works, suggesting the required precautions for works conducted in elevator shafts. ^[9] ^[10] However, are the penalty, enforced checks and guidelines sufficient to prevent the recurrence of similar accidents? What inter-connected causes are there behind this tragedy? Let us apply the "Swiss cheese model" (note 1) to investigate and reflect on the cause. According to the model's theories, the cause an accident can be four-fold: organizational influence, lack of safety supervision, conditions leading to unsafe operations, and unsafe operations. ^[11] Each level has barriers to avoid risks caused by human negligence, and each barrier has loopholes. When all loopholes align, accidents will happen. ^[11] In this accident, were it not that the contractor was rushing to meet the deadline, and had built an temporary, insecure work platform, but rather followed the safety regulations to build a proper work platform (organizational influence); if the Labour Department has checked the relevant work site and discovered the potential danger, and asked the contractor to redress it and eliminate the risk (lack of safety supervision); if the work process began only after being confirmed by the works supervisor and passed a risk assessment (conditions leading to unsafe operations); if the worker was informed that the platform was a temporary construction and was insecure, and that the construction waste on the platform already exceed the tolerable limit, they will not engage in the works (unsafe operations). Thus, if loopholes do not exist on all the above 4 levels, the accident may be avoidable.

The tragedy has not prevented further accidents from happening. With infrastructure projects of various scales continuing to launch, industrial accidents continue unabated; industrial safety is an issue that must be tackled. The authorities should fully examine relevant safety laws and guidelines, and strengthen monitoring and enforcement. Employers must exercise their basic duties to protect worker safety and health, to prevent the recurrence of such tragedies. Also, the registered safety officer plays an important role in promoting worker's occupational health and safety. Besides providing training in this area, they also help analyse occupational risks, evaluate potential risks, and identify risky situations. ^[12] In this accident, while the developer emphasized that a safety officer is on duty on that day, ^[13] the Construction Industry Employees General Union suspected that workers were not working under supervision of a safety officer and hence the accident is a result of that negligence. ^[14] If a safety officer is supervising on site, could it have prevented the accident from happening? Such insecure work platforms were not used for the first time, but why has the safety officer identified the risk when conducting earlier risk assessments? Is the safety officer lacking in professional quality, or were they "turning a blind eye" because of orders from above? That they must neglect workers' safety to rush the works? Is it that the worker's safety, or even their lives, must be sacrificed for economic benefit? These questions are worth our consideration.

Also, to protect workers from accidents because of unsafe practices, relevant education and training must be enforced to promote workers' safety awareness. Now, although there are regulations in place requiring construction workers to take examinations for a safety card before working at worksites, the curriculum is rather hollow and does not target the occupational health and safety situations of particular work types; it is thus lacking in effectiveness. Relevant training organizations should fully review and revise the curriculum content to raise occupational safety and health awareness of workers.

Meanwhile, promotion about occupational safety and health should also be conducted. Presently, although the Labour Department and the Occupational Safety and Health Council have published various promotional posters and leaflets, whether such promotional material can effectively reach the workers remains a question. The government departments may work with workers' unions to reach more grassroots workers through their network, to achieve better promotional effect. In other words, prevention of the recurrence of such accidents requires concerted efforts from all fronts.

Note 1: In 1990 Reason proposed the Swiss cheese model to explain the chain connection between the causes of an accident. The theory emphasizes on organizational safety and incident prevention. Each piece of cheese represents a link, also perceived as a barrier; the holes on the cheese are the points of error possible in the link. If all holes align across different pieces of cheese, light may pass through and that presents the occurring of an incident. [11]

Knowledge about Occupational Safety and Health

Over the past decade or so, among the fatal accidents in the construction industry, "falling from heights" takes up over 50% of all accidents. One fourth of these accidents involve "work platforms/temporary supportive frames."^[15] According to article 38B of Construction Sites (Safety) Regulation, Chapter 591 of the law of Hong Kong, the contractor should take adequate steps, including the provision, use and maintenance of work platforms; guard-rails, barriers, toe-boards and fences; coverings for openings; gangways and runs, to prevent any person on the site from falling from a height of 2 metres or more.^[16] The Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance also stipulates that employers should provide all necessary information, instruction, training, and supervision for ensuring safety and health of the employees.^[17]

Working at high altitude – full body harness

After the accidents, the Elevator (Hong Kong) Workers' Union pointed out that the worksite should be monitored by supervisory personnel stationed on site, in order to prevent accidents. All work-related risk assessment should be completed by the site supervisor before work proceeds.^[18] Besides toe-boards, fences should be installed around each work platform to prevent tools from falling off the edges.^[18] Also, workers should wear safety harnesses – the full body harness now used is safer than the old waist harnesses. The harness includes a lifeline, and when used with suitable suspension system, creates a personal fall-arresting system.^[19] The full body harness spreads the force of a fall through the whole body, and effectively reduces the injury.^[18] Although a safety harness may help reduce injuries in high altitude accidents, precautions should be taken in works management and administrative practices, to eliminate risky and unsafe elements in the work environment. Personal protective gear should act as the last line of defence.

“Safety of Elevator Shaft works” [9]

In the accident, it is highly risky that workers set foot on a bamboo scaffolding work platform built over an elevator shaft. The workers also lack occupational safety and health knowledge. The Occupational Safety and Health Council published Guidelines on safety of Lift Shaft Works (Vol 1) in July 2010, hoping to minimize accidents. The content of the guideline includes: (I) Planning lift shaft works (II) Providing protection for lift shafts (III) Risk assessment and work procedures (IV) Design, construction, use and maintenance of lift shaft platforms (V) Implementing the work permit system (IV) Providing fall-arresting facilities and safety training.

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Return to work for injured workers

Foreword

In the over 500 cases the Hong Kong Workers' Health Centre handles every year, early stage cases of work injury (within 6 months of injury) took up over 30% of all cases. After injury, most early stage workers hope to seek suitable treatment and recovery, and return their original work duties as soon as possible. However, the recovery process is fraught with doubts and hurdles: lack of understanding of their injuries and the recuperation process, dealing with the complexities of the work injury, changes in daily life, lack of support from the employer and suitable work arrangements. These all create stress and a sense of helplessness in workers.

Case studies

Case 1:

Mr. Chan has been working for over a decade as a bus driver. In driving one of the routes he was involved in a traffic accident when avoiding another vehicle cutting into his lane. He suffered a neck injury. After the injury, Mr. Chan received physical therapy and treatment by orthopaedic physicians. After months of treatment, the doctor believed Mr. Chan had stabilized and encouraged him to return to his duties. Mr. Chan thus contacted the company directly to discuss arrangements to return to work. During the negotiation, the company wished Mr. Chan could provide a letter of proof from a doctor proving that he was capable of handling his work duties. Mr. Chan thus tried contacting the doctor asking for the required letter, but he was unable to get the required letter whether from public or private medical channels. Mr. Chan is now still unable to resume his duties.

Case 2:

Ms. Wong has been working almost 5 years as a health care assistant in an elderly hostel. Once when she was carrying an elderly dweller from a wheelchair to the bed, she lost her balance and sat on the ground. Upon doctor's diagnosis and checks, she was diagnosed with a fractured tail bone. Since her injury, Ms. Wong has been keep close contact with her superiors, hoping to return to her original duties. After months of treatment, the doctor believed Ms. Wong has stabilized and signed her a certificate for light work, encouraging her to return to work. Sadly, Ms. Wong's superiors declined to have her back due to inability for the hostel to make suitable arrangements.

Discussion

In the process of helping injured workers return to work, in particular to their original duties with accommodation, the above two cases are very common. In Hong Kong, injured workers mostly receive orthopaedic treatment and recovery therapy at public hospitals. After the injury stabilizes, the doctor would sign a certificate for light work or trial work, to encourage workers re-join the work force. Sadly, some employers are unclear about how to arrange “light/transitional work”, and some would require doctors to issue a proof of health for a chance for work resumption. For injured workers, the healing of the wound, the need and process of recovery process are based on doctor’s judgment. The doctor, based on his medical opinion, would determine whether the worker is stabilized and suitable for arranging assessment of permanent loss of earning capacity. In fact, when the employer ask the employee to submit a doctor’s certificate to proof that the latter is suitable to return to work, the doctor must be provided with information in listing the requirements of the duty, including: work title, description of duties, requirements of the functions; so that the doctor may learn of the requirements of the job and issue a document proofing the employee is suitable for that job. Sadly, due to the lack of coordination of occupational rehabilitation at work injury system, execution of such desirable practices is rare in Hong Kong, and often the worker, failing to provide effective proof, would lose the golden opportunity for work resumption.

The aim of “light work/transitional work” is to allow workers to try taking up suitable work in their original duty and work environment with accommodations that matches their speed of recovery. For workers, they may use suitable pain management skills to recover and build up their confidence in return to work. Sadly, in the Employees' Compensation Ordinance promulgated in 1953, there is no mention of systems of recovery and resumption of work. In other labour related laws, there was also no clear and systematic guidelines requiring the employers to arrange for recovering/recovered employees to resume work, including making suitable accommodating arrangements. Thus, most employers, due to the lack of professional support, take a passive attitude toward “light work/transitional work”, or even reject such requests. In certain cases, employer-employee relations would deteriorate, and employees with work injury would suffer emotional stress and their confidence to resume work would suffer.

Advocacy by the Centre

The Hong Kong Workers’ Health Centre understands that if an injured worker is to successfully return to his duty, collaboration and coordination between different stakeholders is necessary: doctors, therapists, employer, co-workers, insurance company, injured worker and the government. The employer plays a particularly important role. According to the Centre’s experience in helping injured workers resume work using the case management model, it is important to support the companies build up good work injury management practices. Through organizing seminars and workshops on handling cases of occupational health and work injury for the past years, employers gain an understanding of the needs of injured employees, and in doing so raise the chances for workers to recover and re-join the workforce in a timely manner – a win-win situation.

However, under the present employee compensation system, injured worker only provided with monetary compensation. The ordinance has no provisions about medical and rehabilitation coordination, and arrangements for resuming work. To raise the chances for injured workers to successfully return to work, the policy maker should review the insufficiencies in the existing system by referring to the policies and ordinances on the Mainland China and other neighbouring regions in Asia, and make timely amendments to help injured workers return to work.

The Centre believes that with timely treatment and early intervention in rehabilitation, injured workers will be able to regain work capabilities or develop other new skills, and return to their original duties or take up other suitable work. In the process, suitable psychological and social support should be given. This constitutes not only effective support for injured workers, but also helps employers to retain the productive manpower and reduce burden on social resources.

What's New

Highlights from “Community promotion programme for Prevention of Asbestosis”

To promote public awareness of asbestosis and the occupational health issues related to asbestos, the Workers' Health Centre, joining hands with the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union, under the sponsor of The Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board, launched a two year, region-wide occupational health programme in November 2011 titled “Community promotion programme for Prevention of Asbestosis”.

The promotional programme has organized numerous events in February and March this year in two districts crowded by old buildings. These activities included: carnivals, ambassador training workshops, community seminars, and street exhibitions. Also, through posters and leaflets, residents of old buildings and frontline repair workers are given better understanding of the dangers of asbestos and the common locations of asbestos materials in old buildings. They also gain an understand of how to properly deal with suspected asbestos materials during work, enabling residents and workers to take suitable precautions to avoid being inflicted by asbestosis or other related diseases. In the future, the Centre will continue to move on to other key locations to organize various promotion activities and to spread the positive messages of the programme among different segments of society.

Programme on Promoting Pneumoconiosis Prevention for Construction Workers

Construction Industry has long been an integral part of the Hong Kong economy and also one of the industries which most labour engaged in. With the recent economic recovery in Hong Kong, many infrastructure and urban renewal projects are currently in progress. In particular, the "Operation Building Bright" and the "Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme" projects have significantly increase the number of minor works in Hong Kong. However, if there are no appropriate precautions, or the occupational health and safety policies and laws are not strictly implemented and executed, frontline construction workers are put at risk, resulting in work injuries and occupational diseases.

To efficiently enhance workers' awareness on Pneumoconiosis (an occupational lung disease) and other occupational diseases, Hong Kong Workers' Health Centre, with the great support from the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board (PCFB), is going to initiate a series of education programs with the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union (HKCIEGU) in the districts where most constructions and building maintenances take place. This project aims at providing workers with knowledge of occupational risks to better protect their health and well-being.

Duration: 1st Jan, 2013 – 31st Dec, 2013

Target :

- Construction workers in small construction sites
- Construction workers and contractors from the Operation Building Bright project and other building maintenance and renewal related projects

Details :

- "Pneumoconiosis Prevention Ambassador" Training
- Pneumoconiosis Prevention Talks
- Exhibitions at construction sites
- Medical referral for Pneumoconiosis and other related diseases

Increasing numbers of building demolition and renovation projects took place in the recent years, which increases also the number of minor works throughout the different districts in Hong Kong. If those projects do not comply with the relevant legislation appropriately, the asbestos-containing materials used in the old buildings could possibly be destroyed during the demolition process and expose to the environment. The release of asbestos fibers can harm the health of workers and residents living in the building.

In order to raise and strengthen the public awareness of asbestos hazards and the occupational health concern of asbestos, Hong Kong Workers' Health Centre, with the sponsorship from the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board (PCFB), cooperates with the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union (HKCIEGU) in the implementation of a two-year trans-regional health promotion project, namely the "Community Promotion Programme on Asbestosis Prevention".

The asbestosis prevention knowledge and concept will be promoted through a series of activities, including ambassador trainings, large-scale exhibitions, regional talks and workshops arrangement, posters and leaflets distribution and so on. The penetrant promotion method helps the residents of old buildings and front-line workers to know more about the hazards of asbestos on human body, as well as the locations of asbestos materials in old buildings and the correct approaches when dealing with the suspected asbestos materials in their work. Residents and workers can then take early and appropriate preventive measures to avoid the release of asbestos fibers and protect them from suffering asbestosis or other related diseases.

At the same time, we are also conducting a survey under this project to investigate the cognitive and awareness level of Hong Kong residents on the hazards of asbestos materials. The data collected will provide a valuable basis for future advocacy on the policies and measures of asbestos prevention. Readers can enter this website (link: <http://goo.gl/ir3Xk>) to fill in the online questionnaire (only chinese version) in anytime. The process is convenient so please assist us in providing the valuable data.

職安健訓練課程新推介

職安局致力為各界人士及企業，提供不同種類的職安健訓練課程。本局一向因應社會當時的需求，設計合適的課程來配合。以下為2013年1-3月新增的職安健訓練課程：

1. 建造業強制性基本安全訓練課程(建造業平安咭課程) (英文班)

The course aims to provide the relevant basic safety and health training to the workers of Construction Industry. Participants who have successfully completed the course and passed the examination will be awarded the "Construction Industry Safety Card".



2. 樹藝工作安全健康

雖然香港被喻為石屎森林，但我們仍可看見不少優美的樹木種植在周遭的環境。這有賴樹藝管理人士及樹藝師為樹木進行定期及有需要時的保育和修剪等工作。政府於2010年3月在發展局工務科轄下成立綠化、園境及樹木管理組，倡導新的策略性綠化、園境及樹木管理政策，使香港持續發展更綠化的環境。因此，樹藝管理人士及樹藝師的工作便顯得日益重要。但樹藝師為樹木進行保育和修剪工作會涉及高風險的工作，這包括高空作業（例如修剪在樹身高處的樹枝和樹杈）、使用具危險性的設備（例如操作鏈鋸修剪和移除樹木）與及環境的危害（例如樹木靠近電纜設施）等等。



在許多情況下，任何樹木都有可能變成具有潛在危險的樹木。樹藝工作規劃與施工程序上如考慮未盡周詳，可能引至嚴重的傷亡意外，不能不格外審慎。樹藝管理人士必須進行風險評估，識別危險的樹木及環境，為相關工作人士設立一套安全的工作系統，由受過相關專門訓練，可合資格地進行該工作的人士執行，並須接受嚴密的監管，確保工人在安全的環境下工作。

本課程旨在為從事樹藝管理人士，講解進行有關樹木保育和修剪等工作的風險評估及應採取的安全措施。

3. 有效管理家庭關係及工作壓力工作坊

員工在工作場所面對的壓力，除可導致身體、精神及人際關係出現問題、甚或病症外，也會影響他們的家庭、婚姻和養育子女的成效。同樣，員工的家庭生活素質也會影響他們在工作場所的工作表現。

近年來，許多有關「工作與家庭關係問題」的研究指出：隨著生活節奏越變急速，工作場所的壓力越來越大，婦女進入工作場所的機會增多、男性的角色轉變及家庭結構改變，員工夾在工作場所與家庭兩者之間的壓力越見尖銳，甚至形成惡性循環。有些研究更指出：員工的「工作與家庭關係的衝突」是僱主需要關注及妥善處理的一個問題。

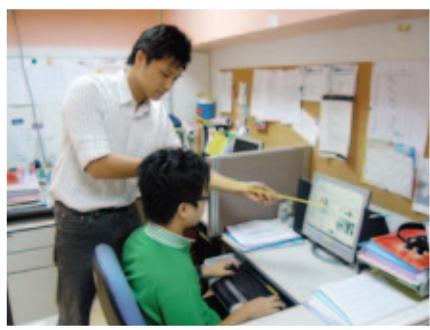
這課程以系統思維、有關家庭、兒童及工作場所的研究結果為基礎，引用一些家庭及職場個案實例，分析一些經常發生的家庭及職場現象；家庭成員及同事之間的互動形式；讓參加者了解家庭關係及工作場所如何影響孩子、自己、家人及同事，從而更有效地改善家庭關係、培育孩子健康地成長、管理在工作場所面對的壓力、增進安全及工作表現。



Occupational Health Promotion for Display Screen Equipment Users

The Project addresses the health risks associated with the use of computer Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and the problem of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) by increasing awareness of how to prevent MSD in the workplace. The project also promotes the importance of good DSE operation practices to prevent MSD. Further, it motivates workers to be actively involved in occupational health and safety (OHS) issues through various training workshops. These missions are accomplished through a health education and promotion programme and an OHS consultancy programme. The former includes educational publications, public exhibitions, talks, medical consultations for workers and hotline enquiry services. The OHS consultancy programme offers DSE assessments and participatory OHS training workshops.

Prior DSE assessment conducted in different organizations revealed that many employees, particularly in NGOs, are being caught in shoulders and arms pain with insufficient funding, these organizations have no other option but to sacrifice the well-being of clerical officers as they are not facing immediate danger in their work. However, these occupational health issues will have a long-term impact on the workers; the harm should not be underestimated. With the Jockey Club's funding, the Centre can now provide free services to the NGOs, so as to improve the occupational health and safety of its staff.



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