

THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY
MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES
OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 6 JULY 2000

PARAGRAPH

Consultancy Report on Development of Site Safety Strategy

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Accident Rate

- (a) The target accident rate of not higher than 95 - 100 per 1 000 workers laid down in the Consultancy Report has been set so that the standard is realistically achievable by the contractors but yet represents a reasonable challenge for improvement.
- (b) The actual accident rate in 1998 is 129 accidents per 1 000 workers and that in 1999 is 109. The target of not higher than 95-100 accidents per 1 000 workers is derived from these records with anticipated improvement.

The Department's Incentive Scheme

- (a) Under the current Pay for Safety Scheme, contractors are rewarded with monetary payment if the site safety performance has accomplished pre-set standard. This ensures that expenditure on site safety will not be unreasonably cut off by irresponsible contractors for cost saving.
- (b) Contractors who perform better in site safety also contribute to a better chance of successfully bidding for a tender under the Preferential Tender Award Scheme.

PARAGRAPH

The responsibility of the Housing Department and the Housing Authority for reducing site accidents

- (a) The Consultancy Report pointed out that the Housing Authority holds a most effective role in influencing standards of safety as one of the major clients letting out tenders. Measures are therefore reinforced along the route of tenders and contract.
 - (b) Contractors are basically responsible for complying with the various regulations related to site safety enforced by the Labour Department. The Housing Department will exercise its influence to ensure compliance.
- 26
- (a) The Housing Department acknowledges that site safety performance in 1999 is far from satisfactory. The Department's implementation of the site safety strategy aims to improve performance.
 - (b) Regarding the possibility of suspending site activities in case of serious incident as a deterrent measure, the Department considers that the cause of a serious incident such as fatal accident must first be examined before penalty is considered. A contractor may not necessarily be culpable. Imposing indiscriminate suspension will not only delay timely delivery of housing unit completion, it may also attract consequential claims for damages from contractors if they are not at fault. For reference, the Labour Department's suspension of site activities aims only to remove risk and is not for punitive purpose.
- 27 & 28
- (a) The Department acknowledges the points raised including the dual importance of safety and health.
 - (b) Regarding the suggestion to set up a dedicated group to oversee site safety and health issues, the Department will set up a Safety Unit as recommended by the Consultancy

PARAGRAPH

Report. Site safety issues will be brought to the attention of the Building Committee as appropriate.

29 (a) Besides the accident rate, the Department will pay close attention to and study the actual number of accidents.

(b) Besides suspension of tendering, contractors will also suffer from deduction of monetary payment under the Pay for Safety Scheme. The Department will review the effectiveness of this scheme and consider reinforcing financial penalty on account of unsatisfactory site safety performance as suggested.

30 The Department supports the points raised the direction of which is also part of the measures to be implemented under the Site Safety Strategy.

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