

Press in June 1996

<i>Press June 27, 1996</i>	
Headline :	<i>HA Initiates Site Safety Measures</i>
Content :	<p>The following is issued on behalf of the Housing Authority :</p> <p>Workers taking site safety courses will be paid a token allowance by the Housing Authority but they will have to pay for the examination fee for obtaining an enhanced Green Card or a Silver Card accredited by the Labour Department.</p> <p>The Authority would for a three-year period bear the costs of a maximum of 3,000 workers a year for the enhanced Green Card scheme, and 1,500 workers a year for the Silver Card scheme.</p> <p>This was endorsed by the Authority's Building Committee today (Thursday) to further enhance workers' safety and efficiency, a spokesman for the Authority said.</p> <p>Under such arrangements, tradesmen will receive an allowance in lieu of wages of \$650 per day while casual workers will be given \$450 per day. The cost for running the courses will be paid by the Construction Industry Training Authority.</p> <p>The spokesman said that building and engineering contracts would include an requirement that workers should hold an enhanced Green Card accredited by the Labour Department, or for workers in designated trades to hold a Silver Card.</p> <p>The estimated cost for the two schemes would be \$1.35 million and \$1.9 million per annum, subject to a maximum of \$9.75 million over the next three years.</p> <p>For tenders issued since early 1996, workers were required to hold a Green Card issued by the Hong Kong Construction Association after attending a basic safety training course while contractors were required to produce safety plans and safety audits.</p> <p>A series of site safety initiatives implemented in the past few years had resulted in a drastic fall in the number of accidents from 2,369 in 1989 to 593 in 1995, a decrease of 75 per cent. At the same time, the accident rate per 1,000 workers dropped by 60 per cent, from 206 in 1989 to 83 in 1995.</p> <p>These measures included relevant contract conditions, better communications and research, launching of a yearly site safety campaign and linking tendering opportunities with contract compliance.</p> <p>The spokesman said that the Committee also endorsed entering a contract with the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) who would develop a safety audit system for the Authority and to carry out day-to-day management of the system.</p> <p>The ceiling costs would be \$2.9 million for 1996/97 and \$3.8 million for 1997/98.</p> <p>Members of the Committee further agreed to set aside \$0.4 million in 1996/97 for this year's site safety campaign which would focus on safety of temporary works, particularly working platforms.</p>

A new award category for workers with good safety practice and sound safety knowledge would be introduced. The campaign would also include a safety seminar to brief contractors on the safety audit system and a newspaper supplement.

In addition to the above measures to promote training and safety awareness as well as achieving partnership with OSHC, the spokesman said that reward and penalty as well as research were two other important factors of the Authority's safety culture strategy.

Under the current Performance Assessment Scoring System (PASS), safety accounted for a maximum of 20 per cent of the PASS output score, which was a very high weighting. Contractors were rewarded with more tendering opportunities for a high standard of safety and be penalized for poor performance.

With assistance from the University of Hong Kong, the Authority maintained a detailed accident database for generation of regular reports which would be distributed to all building contractors.

"As our research indicates that temporary works are a high risk activity, we intend to initiate research into such accidents with a view to improving methods, procedures and training," he added. End
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