

# OSHA Review

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“..... is one too many “

Rheo Lam<sup>1</sup>

Readers may recall an alarming fatal accident which took place last year in a world class commercial skyscraper under construction in Hong Kong. All the six workers fell to death on a Sunday morning. Not much details of this serious accident were uncovered by the media or the parties concerned.

Sketchy information suggests the workers were clearing construction debris in a lift shaft which was allegedly converted into a debris chute. The platform on which these unfortunate workers were standing collapsed and plunged some ten floors together with these workers. It took the firemen hours to unearth the buried workers from the debris.

When the news broke out, people on the street including safety practitioners started to wonder with hind sight why the risks associated with converting a lift shaft for construction waste collection use could not have been identified in the first place. There were suggestions that such conversion had become an adopted trade practice for some years prior to this accident.

When one looks at construction site safety in Hong Kong, one is certainly confident to say that site safety is subject to more than enough scrutiny and inspections. Site inspections of various nature, different requirement origins and at different time intervals are required and carried out by personnel of different management hierarchies and professions throughout project

period. Inspections are overwhelming, one would say!

There are those generated by law e.g. the routine, follow-up inspections conducted by the safety law enforcers e.g. Labour Department. This category must have received the greatest concern and attention of the site management because of the legal consequence.

The second category can be illustrated by the 'Director's Walk' which is required by contractual requirements of large projects. It is one in which top site management physically demonstrates their commitment and supervision of site safety management.

There is the category which is conducted at the project manager and construction engineer levels. Their visits and inspections are mainly for checking on work progress reasons and are much more frequent than the directors or the law enforcers.

Further down the road, there are the supervisors, foremen, safety officers and safety supervisors who are resident on site who are designated to track down site safety on a day in and day out basis. These inspections account for a considerable amount of their time and duty.

There is also the category of planned inspections carried out by independent safety auditors who produce audit reports periodically primarily for statutory compliance or the pay-for-safety schemes purposes. It

could be hardly suggested in the slightest sense that large scale construction projects in Hong Kong are short of inspection and supervision.

When construction sites are subject to such a holistic multi-tier system of safety inspection requirements, there should be great surprise if one suggests that the serious risk causing this multi-fatality accident has escaped the attention of all these different levels of scrutiny.

Is this risk in this disastrous accident too complicate or so unforeseeable that the oversight could exist and survive unnoticed?

The risk assessment approach has been in use for many years in Hong Kong construction site safety. It has become a popular tool in site safety management. Risk assessment reports are a natural product as a result. But most of them have become a pre-fabricated product filled with generic recommendations. They fail to address the risks which are relevant and specific to the activities involved. Too many of these reports fail to do what they are intended for.

The 'Copy-Paste' function has rendered risk assessment report writing much easier. Indiscriminate duplication of a risk assessment report of an earlier project undermines the safety of the project in question. It indeed has become a fatal stumbling block to achieving safety through risk assessment. Many risk assessment reports look great and even 'professional' on paper "satisfying" all submission formalities. They tend to become a nice looking bundle of paper which no one will bother to look at in detail. As a standard outfit, they include all generic stuff required by each of the safety elements in the safety management regulation or contract. However, substance essential to the specific risk of the project could be grossly lacking in many. Risks specific to the site or the activities are not identified at all.

In many cases, all parties are happy with these submissions until something serious has gone wrong one day. In my work, more often than not I have come across such useless safety submissions which have failed to identify the risks associated with the work. In one case, the submission failed to identify the risks of the chemicals used for water proofing. A wrong material catalogue, by mistake or otherwise, of a less hazardous substance was referred to all the way in the safety submission bundle. The actual material to be employed was subsequently tracked down to require air lined breathing apparatus for the workers during application. The original submission appended pictures which the contractor wanted to illustrate it was a safe product. Senior government officials were shown viewing its application without any respiratory protection.

Nowadays, Safety Officers are employed by different trade segments e.g. suppliers, contractors, consultants, employers, employee unions. When working in a concerted mind and effort towards safety, safety professionals are able to truly promote work safety if the required level of proficiency and professionalism is maintained. Unlike before, Safety Officers are no longer the lonely players in the safety field nowadays in Hong Kong. Safety Officers need the cogent support of the people at all levels. Safety is destined to be ruined and its root up lifted when safety is provided as a mere lip service by most people if not everyone.

Hong Kong has still a long way to strive to achieve a level of site safety comparable to its achievements in economy and building technology.

We have heard too many "... is one too many!" sound bites against every serious accident backdrop. It is grossly heart breaking apart from mockery to the industry. We need everyone's heart for safety, mate!

*(This article is also submitted to the Light House Club Magazine)*

<sup>1</sup> Mr Rheo Lam is a Chartered Safety Practitioner with extensive experience in work safety. He is Chairman of the Safety Subcommittee of Light House Club, Past President of the Society of Registered Safety Officers. He has been working nearly for 20 years in the University of Hong Kong and is holding the position of Assistant Director of Safety.

## Occupational Safety and Health Seminar on 29 May 2010

An Occupational Safety and Health Seminar was held on 29 May 2010, at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

**Speaker : Mr. Jesse H. Y. Kwok – Solicitor, Hong Kong**

Topic : Case Study of some OSH Law System – Involving Cap. 59 and Cap. 509



**Speaker : Dr. Norbert FAN – Ex-Committee Member of SRSO**

Topic : OSH Law in UAE, Part 2: Codes of Practice on OSH in UAE



## 安全管工獎2010

本年度安全管工獎有超過450人的參加者，亦是歷年來最多的數目，這反映出前線管工對工地安全的重視。各參賽者以其個人在工地上多年的經驗及心得，給與以下對進一步改善工地安全提供寶貴的意見：

### 短期措施改善工地安全

1. 作為管工，必須自身作則，以自己作出良好的安全榜樣。
2. 主動和前線工友溝通，以“人”為本，多加關心工友的安全，以及作為一橋樑，將工人的意見，反映致管理層。
3. 分配工作給工友時，管工應了解工友的能力及健康狀況是否勝任，不能錯配。
4. 積極參與制訂施工方案及風險評估，如前線管工也不清楚安全施工方法，又怎能帶領工友安全地進行施工？
5. 每天工作前，由地盤負責人、管工及安全主任進行安全早會，提醒工友施工的安全事項，可要求工友複述一次以加強記憶。
6. 高危的地方要加強巡查，如高空工作、密閉空間等。亦可指派“專責員工”或“安全風紀(由工友擔當)”每日進行安全檢查。
7. 對於一些表現未如理想的安全工友，可邀請他們一起進行安全巡查，加強他們的意識。
8. 高危的日子，如假期前後，必須加強人手去檢視安全。
9. 責任方面，應清楚劃分管工的職責及管轄範圍，讓每一人都知道自己的義務，以維持地盤整潔。
10. 不安全 → 即停工。

### 長遠計劃及措施

#### 教育及文化

1. 管工應不停自我增值及與時並進，以獲取更多的安全資訊及知識。
2. 有管工認為現今的大學課程對安全課題的函蓋面並不足夠。有關方面可以考慮在專上課程中，儘量加入安全課題。
3. 一天的平安咭課程是否足夠？工友可否除了在課堂上的課程外，亦須到工地實地考察，方可獲得平安咭？
4. 建立文化，以人為本，安全文化/氣候調查指數可助了解工地上的安全文化有助制訂加強安全文化的措施。
5. 加強透明度 — 管工指出有政府及管理層應清楚說明一些嚴重意外的成因及預防方法，以作改善。(有意外，不應忍瞞)

#### 安全設計 / 分判制度

1. 安全應從設計著手，業主及發展商應在施工前儘量考慮施工時的困難，特別是安全元素，從而制訂出有效的安全措施，安全設計應考慮至將來的維修期。
2. 判標時，發展商 / 業主應考慮承建商以往的安全表現，在發判及分判過程中，可考慮扣分制，把安全表現未如理想的建築商拒於門外。
3. 在發判的合約加入有關的安全標準及定價，同時定出有關安全獎罰的計算方法。
4. 因推行安全工作環境及施工的工序，給舉寬免工期制，使其更有彈性。
5. 低息貸款，作為成本，使小型建築商可以有充足的流動資金。

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**管理及政策**

1. 考慮立例制訂最高工時，工人受傷很多時因為長時間工作而失去專注力。
2. 甄選優質工友進行高風險的工序，這有賴政府及僱主合力制訂相應的政策。
3. 高層擔任安全組長，定期巡查工地，起帶頭作用。
4. 成立跨部門的安全科研部門，研究新技術，取代一些過時及商危的工序。
5. 管理層定期與工友及管工會面，由他們的角度了解在安全層面上應要改善的地方。

6. 工人獎罰的制度要公平及公開，讓工人明白什麼是值得嘉許或懲罰。
7. 設立安全投訴部門(政府及承建商)，讓各階層可藉此提出投訴，保障自身安全。
8. 政府應加強宣傳及教育在加強執法的同時，亦要舉辦多一些安全活動。

以上都是各參賽者對安全上的一點意見，雖則有些問題在執行上有一定的複雜性，但是對建築業安全的邁進亦可作為一定的參考。

**2010年安全管工獎 — 最後十強**

蔡文堅 — 協興-興勝聯營公司

曲偉賢 — 禮頓建築(亞洲)有限公司 \*

林佛良 — 瑞安承建有限公司

劉澤峰 — 建榮工程有限公司

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何皓邦 — 協興建築有限公司

林偉明 — 精進建築有限公司

劉卓景 — 新輝(建築管理)有限公司

李家榮 — 俊和建築有限公司

排名不分先後

參賽者與評審團在面試完畢大合照



參賽者最後  
10強面試



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## 安全管工獎2010頒獎禮

安全管工獎2010頒獎典禮已於9月10日順利舉行。本活動由明建會主辦，註冊安全主任協會協辦，目的旨在確認工地管工對工地安全之重要性並表揚管工對安全之承擔。當日更榮幸邀請到勞工處處長 — 謝凌潔貞太平紳士和眾嘉賓為活動主禮嘉賓。



勞工處處長 — 謝凌潔貞  
太平紳士親臨主禮

### 活動當天盛況

本年度活動反應熱烈，共取得超過470份參賽表格。參賽管工表現超卓，對工地安全知識有豐富認識外，更對工地安全有著獨到的看法；對短期改善措施及



長遠安全計劃均有實際而可行的建議。看到管工對工地安全的執著和認真，在工地安全的參與度日益增加，我們對此感到非常鼓舞。經過初選後，在芸芸參賽者中，最後十強的安全管工誕生，而2010年安全管工獎冠軍得主是曲偉賢先生 — 禮頓建築(亞洲)有限公司。

THE WINNERS OF THE SAFE FOREMAN AWARD 2010



2010年安全管工獎冠軍得主是曲偉賢先生—禮頓建築(亞洲)有限公司

我們熱烈祝賀各位得獎管工，並冀望各管工能積極推動工地安全，與安全從業員通力合作，為香港建造業締造更優越的工作環境。



2010年安全管工獎眾得獎者

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