



安全通訊

Safety Bulletin

May / Jun 2024

香港職業安全衛生協會
THE HONG KONG OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ASSOCIATION

President's Message

Dear Fellow Members and Sponsors,

"See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared." ~ Exodus 23:20

It is my privilege to be elected as the President of HKOSHA for the 2024/5 term. My heartfelt appreciation for the support and guidance of my fellow Executive Council members, especially the Immediate Past President, Mr. Sam SUM, and other gurus who set excellent examples to lead the Association. Without them, HKOSHA would not have been that successful and prosperous since its inception in 1977. They are all the true "angels" of HKOSHA!



Mr. Edward CHOW
HKOSHA President
(2024 – 2025)

When writing this message, a Confined Space tragedy occurred in Shatin, causing two fatalities and two injuries. Unfortunately, similar industrial accidents happen and happen again, albeit various Government Departments, the Construction Industry Council, etc., did lots of things. Are we just giving lip service or not doing our job adequately? I fully understand that it is a collaborative effort from various stakeholders. Yet, as safety practitioners, we should reflect on our roles and responsibilities to improve the plight.

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I thought I was not that "old cake" in HKOSHA, as I joined in 2015 to enroll for the Technical Visit in Taiwan. Later, I discovered that I had been an Associate Member since **1 August 1996** to take the UK's NEBOSH examination in Hong Kong!

As a Christian, I believe that God has guided me to this

position. I am both grateful and humbled to take on the role of President, as I recognize that I have much to learn from all of you - my fellow members and industry partners. I am not a strong leader, but I am committed to using this opportunity to grow and learn from you, the 'angels' of our community.

I believe in synergy and teamwork, and HKOSHA provides an excellent platform for our fellow safety practitioners to work out and contribute to the community. Some of my wishes during this term of service are:

- **Mutual exchange and sharing of OSH experience both locally and internationally;**
- **Cooperation with other institutions to do good for the OSH field and the community as a whole;**
- **Initiating coaching programs to nurture new and young safety practitioners;**
- **Expansion of membership and sponsorship of HKOSHA; and**
- **Addressing OSH issues professionally.**

With all your support, I am confident that HKOSHA will be even better in the future!



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Embedding OSH Practices as Key Pillar of ESG Strategies

Author : Mr. KWONG Chiu Ling, Victor

Author's Profile:

Mr. Victor KWONG is currently Chairman of the Environmental Committee, Institute of ESG & Benchmark, Director of Sustainability Professionals Association, Director of Conservancy Association and Advisory Panel Member of Practising Governance.



He is also a past president of HKOSHA and the founding president of the Hong Kong Federation of Occupational Safety and Health Associations. He has received the Lighthouse Club's Golden Helmet Award and the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health ("IOSH") Distinguished Service Award. He is also the course director of the new ESG course at the Hong Kong Management Association with government subsidiaries contributing ~80% of the course fee.

Addressing the Climate Crisis

In recent years, the world has witnessed a disturbing increase in extreme weather events, closely tied to the rising carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels in our atmosphere. February 2024 marked a significant milestone in this trend, with CO₂ levels surpassing 424.55 ppm, a 50% increase compared to the pre-industrial era. This alarming rise in CO₂ levels has profound implications for our planet's climate and underscores the urgent need for sustainable solutions.

Rising CO₂ Levels: A Historical Perspective

Before this era, CO₂ levels were relatively stable at around 280 ppm. The increase to over 424.55 ppm by February 2024 represents not just a statistical milestone but a clear indicator of the accelerating pace of climate change. Global temperatures have also risen, with February 2024 being 1.73°C higher than in 1880. July 4, 2023, was recorded as the hottest day on Earth in 125,000 years.

Hong Kong's Vulnerability and Climate Research

The 2023 World Economic Forum Report shows that 6 of 10 significant business risks are climate-related. Hong Kong is particularly vulnerable to the climate emergency. The torrential rain following Typhoon Haikui on August 30, 2023, led to a severe flood described as a once-in-500-year occurrence, resulting in insurance claims exceeding HK\$1.9 billion without including business interruption, non-insured loss, etc.

A comprehensive 2023 climate study conducted by the esteemed Chinese University of Hong Kong, the University of Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology has made some alarming predictions. It foresees significant increases in both hot nights and extreme rainfall by the 2040s. The number of hot nights (temperature >28°C) is expected to surge by 50%, with the average longest consecutive number of hot nights growing from 8 to 10 days. Extreme rainfall could see the highest hourly rates reach 230mm in the 2040s, more than 40% higher than current records. These projections significantly raise the likelihood of landslides and severe flooding, painting a grim picture of the future.

International Labour Organization (“ILO”) Prediction on Heat Stress

The 2019 ILO report, "Working on a Warmer Planet," projects that people will lose 2.2% of total working hours worldwide by 2030 due to higher temperatures, equivalent to 80 million full-time jobs resulting in global economic losses of US\$2,400 billion. Outdoor sectors like construction, agriculture, transportation, and utilities will be most affected, with the construction sector expected to see a 19% reduction in global working hours due to heat stress.

IOSH – Catch the Wave Campaign

In November 2021, IOSH launched the global "Catch the Wave" campaign, a call to action for advancing social sustainability. The campaign, which encourages businesses to prioritize people alongside the planet and profit, is crucial to ensuring long-term prosperity. It emphasizes the link between OSH and social sustainability, enabling companies to manage workforce risks effectively while securing long-term success. Investors, as key stakeholders, play a vital role in this journey, seeking assurance that businesses have sustainable models for managing essential skills, knowledge, and experience, recognizing that these cannot be captured by financial metrics alone.

EHS and ESG: A Synergistic Relationship

Intelix's Insight Report highlights the intersection between ESG criteria and Environmental, Health, and Safety (“EHS”) practices. EHS practitioners are crucial in helping organizations adopt and integrate ESG principles. Investor expectations, regulatory pressures, and the pursuit of long-term sustainability drive the growing interest in ESG. EHS practitioners can leverage their expertise to advance ESG initiatives within their organizations, contributing to sustainability goals and long-term success.

Time for a Paradigm Shift: OSH to ESG

Businesses are significantly transforming towards sustainability, with ESG becoming a focal point. OSH is gaining prominence within the “social” component of ESG strategies, now seen as a strategic concern central to a company's sustainability efforts. Effective OSH practices are crucial for achieving ESG goals, especially in managing regulatory compliance. Documenting and reporting OSH practices provide a foundation for ESG programs, offering transparency to stakeholders about a company's current position.

Enhancing OSH Disclosures in ESG Reports

I recently conducted a study of OSH disclosures in the ESG reports of several large organizations in HK and identified strengths and weaknesses. It is proposed to enhance OSH disclosures by referencing GRI 403 - Occupational Safety & Health, a globally recognized standard used by over 10,000 organizations worldwide. Enhanced ESG-OSH disclosures will increase board-level oversight over workplace safety, hopefully mitigating occupational risks over time. The suggested standardization and enhancement of ESG-OSH disclosure is a positive step toward improving workplace safety in Hong Kong.

Conclusion

OSH professionals need a paradigm shift towards ESG, particularly focusing on social sustainability. They can leverage ESG development to transition from cost-preventers to value creators, expanding their responsibilities from OSH to broader involvement in ESG. This shift will enhance their role in business sustainability, positioning them as key contributors to the organization's long-term success.

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How Can Safety Practitioners Play a Proactive Role in Enhancing Construction Safety Management?

Author: Mr. WONG Kin Pong, George
Professional Member, HKOSHA

1. Introduction

Ir Professor Thomas HO, the Chairman of the Construction Industry Council (CIC) who has profound experience of over 40 years in the construction industry and safety, was invited by HKOSHA to deliver a talk in a seminar on “How can safety practitioners play a proactive role in enhancing construction safety management” organized by the CIC on 3 June 2024. At the seminar, Ir Professor HO shared his insight on the reason for the stagnation of progress in construction safety in Hong Kong and how safety practitioners could make a change. He valued the contribution of safety practitioners in protecting our workers but suggested various means to enhance our effectiveness in helping the industry prevent serious and fatal accidents. The writer was deeply impressed by the talk, found it very inspiring for all construction industry stakeholders, particularly our fellow members. This article summarises the key takeaways for our members unable to join this meaningful event.

2. Current Situation

The Safety standard and accident rates in the construction industry have improved over the year, but the number of construction fatalities has not decreased over the last 20 years. An analysis of the most recent 30 construction fatalities revealed the following facts:-

- 100% were without supervision
- 100% were without dynamic risk assessment (DRA)
- 70% were related to temporary work
- 60% involved lone workers
- 50% were the result of falls from height
- 40% of the victims were over 60 years old
- The Smart Site Safety System (4S) was implemented in 3 government sites but did not prevent 3 fatalities in those locations

3. What Went Wrong?

Several factors in our system, as shown below, could have contributed to these weaknesses: -

3.1 Safety Culture

- Safety culture in the industry is fragile.
- There is a general lack of caring culture. Each trade is only concerned with its own priority, e.g. workers cutting essential scaffold support recklessly when it obstructs their work.

3.2 Safety Leadership

- Safety leadership was lacking in many sites, and senior management seldom visited their site to provide direction and encouragement to the frontline working team so that they could work safely.
- Site management is only concerned with worker headcount and progress each day rather than workers' safety behaviour.

3.3 Safety Resources

- Pay for safety schemes from public and private projects has spent around HK\$3.6 billion a year, which should impact on project safety performance, but it doesn't show up in the statistics.

3.4 Sub-contracting

- Many contractors have delegated work and safety responsibilities to subcontractors, which has dramatically compromised safety standards.
- Maximum two-layer subcontracting was not enforced rigorously, resulting in many layers of subcontracting and leading to little or zero margin on the safety budget for the 'real guy', those who carry out the work.

3.5 Lack of Risk Awareness on Tasks

- Dynamic Risk Assessment was not conducted on the spot to address emerging risks from the changing work environment.

3.6 Role of Safety Staff

- Many safety officers lacked sufficient site experience and seldom dared to stop work on safety ground
- Safety staff has spent most of their time preparing the documents and taking photos rather than engaging and advising workers on site.

4. What Safety Practitioner can Contribute Proactively?

Safety practitioners can assist the project management team in implementing the following measures: -

4.1 3-step risk control principle on-site

- Dynamic Risk Assessment - conducted daily by the work team on the spot before commencing work
- Conduct Field Control Briefing
- Proper Change Management - stop work upon any change and review the method of work before work resumption

4.2 Inspection and Test Plan (ITP)

- Safety staff should participate in hold point and control point inspection under ITP with RSS/IOW/COW to verify the adequacy of risk control measures.

4.3 CIC Safety Focus

- Design for Safety (Written into Contracts)
- Temporary Work Management
- Safety Roles and Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders
- Smart Site Safety Systems (4S)

5. Other Suggestions for the Management

- Top/senior management shall walk the site and discuss safety regularly.
- If there is no supervision, no work should proceed.
- Of the recent 15 fatalities related to scaffolds, 14 were related to bamboo scaffolds. Some major developers/contractors are moving towards metal scaffold as a general policy.
- P, N, C Helmet label advocates by CIC is a good practice in caring for the needs of vulnerable workers on site.
- Safety promotion involving workers' family members could raise safety culture dramatically.
- Construction industry does not attract young people, as only 6% of employees are below 35 years old. Innovation, technology, and safer sites are the necessary attractions.
- The risk of electrocution in working inside a false ceiling after energisation is high, but workers seldom check volt-free within a 1.5m radius before work.
- Lifting safety is another critical area. A good practice from Hip Hing Construction is mandating the installation of sensors that give warning when structural or bolt movement in tower cranes is detected.

6. Insight from Guest Speakers in CIC Master Class in Safety Leadership Culture quoted by Ir Professor Thomas HO

- Mr. CHOY Hon-Ping, the Chairman and MD of Hip Seng Group of Companies, shared his belief that 'everyone is his own safety manager' which is a great concept.
- Mr. CHIANG Tung Keung, CEO of China Light and Power Group, advocates the importance of a high reliability organisation, which is a great model that aims to protect people.



Ir Professor Ho shared his insight passionately and received appreciation certificate from our President, Mr Edward CHOW

7. Concluding Remark

Ir Professor HO earnestly requested safety practitioners to help managing risks on-site by spending more time on-site and engaging with workers. He then ran a slideshow of recent fatalities with a touching song reminding us of the enormous pain that accident victims and their families would go through for the rest of their lives. The talk was a great success, and many questions were raised from the floor which caused an overrun of the event.

I admired Ir Professor HO greatly, not because I started my safety career in Gammon but because of his unfailing support and leadership towards health and safety for all these years and his passion to continue this journey and walk the talk after retirement. I fully agree with his observation and advice on the importance of engagement with frontline supervisors and workers in a proactive approach. As a safety practitioner, it is our responsibility to protect our workers with our best effort and knowledge, and our role is no less meaningful than that of a medical practitioner, as both of us take care of the safety and well-being of people in the face of accidents. Our skill lies in prevention, and it allows us to take pride in our profession by managing risk proactively.



Participants asked questions enthusiastically during the Q & A session

HKOSHA NEWS

Current Members

As of end June 2024, there are 451 members in HKOSHA.

The following membership application was approved in June 2024

Approval of Membership

Name	Grade of Membership
CHAN Wai Hang	Professional Member (Safety)



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