

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Concern on Work Safety on Bamboo Scaffolds

Hong Kong • 7 April 2017 – The Construction Industry Council (CIC) expressed deep concern on a number of serious accidents involving working on bamboo scaffolding or other working-at-height since 8 March this year. To enhance the safety protection of people working on bamboo scaffolds and the general public, CIC held a meeting with the relevant government departments and construction industry stakeholders on 14 March 2017 to discuss measures to avoid similar accidents.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the Development Bureau (DEVB), the Buildings Department (BD), the Labour Department (LD), the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HKHA), the Hong Kong & Kowloon Scaffolders General Merchants Association, the Hong Kong Scaffolding SME Association, the HK & Kowloon Bamboo Scaffolding Workers Union, The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union, the Hong Kong Construction Sub-Contractors Association, the Hong Kong General Building Contractors Association, the Hong Kong Federation of Occupational Safety and Health Association, the Occupational Safety and Health Council, The Hong Kong Federation of Electrical and Mechanical Contractors, the Federation of Hong Kong Electrical & Mechanical Industries Trade Unions, and the Construction Industry Council.

Serious / fatal fall-from-height accidents when working on bamboo scaffolds which may also pose a danger to the workers and general public in the vicinity are attributed to absence of suitable safety measures. The CIC has issued *Safety Alert No. 001/17 – Work Safety on Bamboo Scaffolds (Safety Alert)* to encourage and remind contractors, employers, safety practitioners, subcontractors and workers to implement the following safety measures:

As Contractors / Employers:

- **Providing Safe Means of Access / Egress and Working Platforms** – Contractors / Employers should follow the Schedule 3 of the CSSR and provide safe and secure means of access to or egress from every place of work, and ensure that catch-fans are provided on different level of scaffolding, and the catch-fans should be properly maintained to prevent passers-by from being injured by falling materials.

- **Conducting Task-specific Risk Assessment** – Appoint a competent person to conduct task-specific risk assessments to identify all potential hazards that are associated with the work being carried out and formulate safe work methods, safe work procedures for the work and relevant safety measures.
- **Providing Training and Supervision** – Besides providing all workers / employees concerned with the necessary safety information, instruction and training, an effective monitoring and control system should be established to ensure all safety measures are strictly implemented.
- **Providing Fall Arresting System** – If the provision of working platform is not reasonably practicable, set up a fall arresting system by providing every worker / employee with a suitable safety harness and take steps to ensure that the fall arresting system is properly used by every worker concerned.

As Safety Practitioner:

- Conduct task specific risk assessments of work-at-height, provide safety training on working on bamboo scaffolds to relevant persons / workers, develop and implement effective proactive inspection programme, formulate an appropriate inspection check-list by making reference to the Safety Guidance for Working at Height in the Construction Industry 「建造業高處工作安全須知」 (with Chinese Version only) published by the Occupational Safety and Health Council.

As Subcontractor:

- Properly lay the working platforms and toe-boards on the bamboo scaffolds according to the instructions and requirements of the Main Contractors and maintaining their safe condition before instructing their workers to work on the scaffolds.
- Establish a monitoring system that should be strictly implemented to ensure that the working platforms and toe-boards are properly laid and ensure the working platforms are used properly.

As Workers or Persons who Need to Work on the Bamboo Scaffolds:

- Do not use substandard or not properly erected scaffolds / working platforms, no alternation, addition or dismantling of bamboo scaffold should be allowed without

authorization.

- If the scaffold is defective or the safety of which is in doubt, leave the bamboo scaffold immediately and inform the Main Contractor to take appropriate follow-up actions.
- Tightly control the loading imposed on the scaffolds during the execution of work on it. Do not overload the bamboo scaffolds.
- If use of fall arresting system and safety harness are required, workers / employees should continuously attach their safety harness to a suitable and secure anchorage point, an independent lifeline or a fall arresting system from a safe place before proceeding to and leaving the place of work and throughout the work.
- Wear suitable helmets with chin straps complying with relevant standards.

Mr. CHEUNG Hau-wai, Executive Director of the CIC added, "In addition to complying with the safety management practices in bamboo scaffolding, contractors and employees should also make reference of the above Safety Alert and adopt appropriate safety measures to ensure that construction works are carried out safely to protect the safety of general public and people working on bamboo scaffolds."

Mr. CHOW Luen-kiu, Chairman of the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union stressed, "We urge all people who need to work on bamboo scaffolding not to alter any bamboo scaffold. Workers should at all time wear safety harness which should be continuously attached to a suitable and secure anchorage point. If the scaffold is defective, workers should leave the bamboo scaffold immediately to protect their own."

Ms. Ada FUNG, Chairperson of the Committee on Construction Safety of the CIC said, "The Construction Industry Council, the Labour Department and the Occupational Safety and Health Council have issued a number of codes of practice, guidelines and points to note on the safety measures relating to work on bamboo scaffolding and working-at-height. In regard to the recent accidents, the CIC immediately took action by meeting with industry stakeholders and discussing safety improvement measures. The CIC has compiled the relevant information and published the *Safety Alert - Work Safety on Bamboo Scaffolds*, to enhance the safety awareness of contractors, employers, subcontractors, competent person and bamboo scaffolders."

The Safety Alert is available for download from the CIC's website:

http://www.cic.hk/cic_data/pdf/about_cic/publications/eng/alert/SA-CSY-001-17-E.pdf



About the Construction Industry Council

The Construction Industry Council (CIC) was formed in 2007 under the Construction Industry Council Ordinance (Cap. 587). The CIC consists of a chairman and 24 members representing various sectors of the industry including employers, professionals, academics, contractors, workers, independent persons and Government officials.

The main functions of the CIC are to forge consensus on long-term strategic issues, convey the industry's needs and aspirations to the Government, provide professional training and registration services, and serve as a communication channel between the Government and the construction industry.

Please visit www.cic.hk for further details.

Media Enquiries

Patricia CHIU / Lucy POON
Corporate Communications Department
Tel: (852) 2100 9044 / 2100 9041
Fax: (852) 2100 9090
Email: corpcomm@cic.hk

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