

Contractors/employers and employees urged workplace safety before Chinese New Year holidays

With Chinese New Year around the corner, the Labour Department has urged contractors, employers and employees to be more vigilant and take adequate safety precautions at workplaces before the holidays.

A spokesperson for the department said today (February 5) that employers and employees should pay more attention before Chinese New Year holidays to work safety to prevent accidents.

The spokesperson said, "As Chinese New Year is coming, employees may become less aware of work safety because of the festive atmosphere, or may have to rush to complete work before the holidays. Employers should therefore step up monitoring to ensure workplace safety and eliminate potential hazards through pre-holiday safety inspections, thereby minimising the chance of grave consequences during and after the Chinese New Year holidays. Safety precautions before the holidays include turning off the power for plant and machinery, proper storage of chemicals, stacking materials in an orderly manner, extinguishing naked flames, shutting down gas welding equipment, and securing temporary structures.

"Management should remind supervisors and employees not to compromise work safety for tight work schedules, including failure to take adequate safety precautions, failure to follow safety procedures, and failure to use personal protective equipment. Risk assessment should be conducted by competent persons prior to the commencement of different work processes, with safe work method statements formulated and proper monitoring systems in place, especially for work involving high-risk operation, such as working at height, lifting operation, tunnelling works and electrical work," the spokesperson added.

The general duty provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance require employers to provide safe working environments, plant and systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the relevant provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for two years on conviction on indictment; or \$3 million and imprisonment for six months on summary conviction.

Meanwhile, employees should co-operate by following safety instructions and by using safety equipment.

For enquiries on occupational safety and health, please contact the department's occupational safety officers at 2559 2297.