

Hospital Authority vigorously pursues liabilities of contractor in surgical light falling incident

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (December 5) announced that disciplinary actions have been taken to vigorously pursue liabilities of the maintenance contractor in the United Christian Hospital surgical light falling incident. The HA confirmed that the contractor concerned had performed below the standard of the contract requirement, leading to the occurrence of the incident which imposed a serious impact on hospital safety. The HA will continue excluding the contractor concerned from participation of future tendering and quotation exercises for all ceiling-mount medical equipment for a period of time until the HA is satisfied with the improved performance of the contractor concerned.

The following actions have been endorsed by the HA Board with immediate effect:

1. The contractor concerned has to make an open apology to the HA;
2. The contractor concerned has to settle compensation to the HA for all losses and expenses incurred from the incident; and
3. The HA has excluded the contractor concerned from participation in future tendering and quotation exercises for all ceiling-mount medical equipment since this September. The HA will continue to implement the measure for one year, until September 2024. The HA will consider lifting the suspension from tendering only after the contractor's service performance and quality are reviewed and has proved capable to meet the requirements.

The HA spokesperson said, "The HA is highly concerned about the incident. Considering the severity of the surgical light falling incident and the performance of the contractor concerned, the HA decided to take a series of disciplinary actions to vigorously pursue the liabilities of the contractor concerned. These disciplinary actions are taken based on reasonable, rigorous and prudent considerations. This also serves as an unequivocal message that the HA has zero tolerance for any substandard service quality level, and that the action of suspension from tendering will be confined to future tender exercises."

The HA will enhance the existing tendering and quotation exercises by introducing a new marking scheme to strengthen the HA's governance over contractors' performance and to ensure the quality of tendering and quotation exercises. The HA will take into consideration any poor past performance of the bidders during the assessment of the procurement exercise.

The HA spokesperson supplemented that the HA has immediately taken a

series of measures after the incident. The HA has requested contractors to conduct a comprehensive inspection and replace mounting screws for all surgical lights of the same model in public hospitals to ensure safety. The HA has also invited the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department and engaged an independent engineering expert to conduct an investigation to find out the root cause of the incident. The HA has also enhanced the maintenance of all ceiling-mount medical equipment immediately, including explicitly specifying the obligations and requirements of contractors in tender specifications, tightening the interval of safety checks and replacement of safety parts, and requiring the contractor to strictly follow the safety check and maintenance procedures.

The HA is duly following up on the advice from the Review Committee on Medical Equipment and Facility Maintenance to enhance governance towards contractors. Biomedical engineering staff will be deployed to carry out on-site supervision of high-risk category medical equipment maintenance services provided by contractors. All public hospitals have formed Hospital Safety Committees to conduct regular safety audits and inspections of hospital facilities and equipment, and assess potential safety hazards in order to take preventive measures. An HA Safety Committee was also formed at the HA Head Office to develop corporate-wide policies and procedures on the safety and risk management of hospital facilities and equipment.

The HA will continue to strengthen governance, enhance performance of medical equipment contractors and take proactive measures to ensure safety of patients and staff members.