

Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident that happened in Tai Wai yesterday

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about a fatal work accident that happened at a construction site in Tai Wai yesterday afternoon (November 9), in which a male worker, while loading goods, was trapped by a material hoist that descended suddenly. He was certified dead later in hospital. The LD is saddened by the death of the worker and expresses its deepest sympathy to his family.

The LD's spokesman said, "We commenced an immediate on-site investigation as soon as we were notified of the accident and issued suspension notices to the contractors concerned, suspending the installation, alteration, dismantling and use of the hoist. The contractors cannot resume the work until the LD is satisfied that measures to abate the relevant risks have been taken."

The spokesman added, "We will complete the investigation as soon as possible to identify the cause of the accident, ascertain the liability of the duty holders and recommend improvement measures. We will take actions pursuant to the law if there is any violation of the work safety legislation."

To prevent workers from being trapped by material hoists, the LD reminds contractors to ensure that secure gates are fitted to the hoistway enclosure where access to and egress from the hoist is required. The gate of material hoists at each loading and unloading point shall be fitted with efficient interlocking devices such that the hoists are operable only when all gates are closed. Hoist winches shall be fitted with efficient brakes or other similar safety devices, to prevent the hoists and their loads from falling out of control or dangerously. Also, the hoists shall be inspected, tested and examined in accordance with the manufacturer's instruction and the statutory requirements to ensure that they are in safe working order.

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.

In regard to yesterday's accident, the LD will issue a Work Safety Alert through its mobile application "OSH 2.0", website and email, giving a brief account of the accident concerned to duty holders, workers' unions, professional bodies of safety practitioners and others, and reminding the industry of the importance of following safety precautionary measures to

prevent a recurrence of similar accidents.

The LD will also remind the employer concerned of the liability for employees' compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, assist family members of the deceased to claim employees' compensation and closely follow up on the case. For those with financial difficulties, the LD will assist them to apply for appropriate emergency funds. Subject to the needs and wishes of family members of the deceased, the LD will also liaise with the Social Welfare Department for financial or other assistance.

For the sake of securing the safety and health of employees at work, the LD appeals to employers to provide plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and use personal protective equipment provided properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.