

Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident that happened today

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about a fatal work accident that happened in Sai Wan this morning (August 18), in which two government employees while working on an elevating work platform to conduct tree pruning work, fell down together with the working platform as the boom of the elevating work platform suddenly broke. One of them died and the other was injured in the accident. The LD is saddened by the death and injury of the employees in the accident and expresses its deepest sympathy to the deceased's 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 department concerned, suspending the use of the elevating work platform involved as well as tree inspection and pruning work with the use of any elevating work platform at the accident scene. The department concerned cannot resume the work process 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."

The general duty provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance require occupiers of premises/employers to provide safe means of access and egress and safe working environments, plant and systems of work for the employees.

In regard to today's accident, the LD will issue a Work Safety Alert through its website and email, giving a brief account of the accident concerned to duty holders, workers' unions, professional bodies of safety practitioners and others, reminding the industry of the importance of following safety precautionary measures to prevent a recurrence of similar accidents.

The LD will assist the family members of the deceased in handling compensation matters under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance 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 the family members, 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 properly use personal protective equipment provided to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.