

Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident that happened yesterday

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about the work accident that happened in a container terminal at Tuen Mun last night (April 3), in which a female worker, while walking along a vehicle access in the container terminal, was knocked down by a reach stacker and sustained fatal injury. The LD is saddened by the death of the worker and has expressed its deepest sympathy to the victim's family.

The LD's spokesman said, "We commenced immediate on-site investigation as soon as we were notified of the accident. We have issued suspension notices to the occupier of the premises and the employer involved suspending the use of the vehicle access by workers as foot passageway and use of the reach stacker. The LD will only revoke the suspension notices when we are satisfied that measures to abate the relevant risk have been taken."

The spokesman added, "We will complete 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."

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. Those who contravene the above provisions are liable to a fine of \$200,000 and imprisonment for six months.

In regard to this 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, and reminding the industry of the importance of following safety precautionary measures to prevent 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.