

Special enforcement operation on safety of new works construction sites in Kai Tak Development Area and Kowloon Bay

In light of the spate of fatal accidents that happened at new works sites in the Kai Tak Development Area and Kowloon Bay in April this year, the Labour Department (LD) commenced a four-week special enforcement operation on April 23 targeting the new works sites located in the above-mentioned areas to curb unsafe work activities for protecting workers' safety.

The LD's spokesman today (May 11) said, "In the second week of the operation, we inspected 18 new works sites with 129 improvement notices issued and 12 prosecutions initiated. The above-mentioned legal notices and prosecutions mainly involved work at height, electrical work and lifting operations."

The spokesman added, "During the operation, the LD noticed that some contractors had failed to comply with the safety legislation regarding lifting operations, including failing to thoroughly examine lifting gear in the preceding six months before it was used and failing to clearly mark on the lifting gear its safe working load. Using such lifting gear in lifting operations may overload the gear beyond its safe working load, causing the loads to collapse and hence resulting in serious accidents. In addition, the LD also detected that some contractors had failed to properly segregate and clearly demarcate the operating zones for the operation of earth moving equipment, and failed to provide physical barriers, signs, notices, etc. Workers were prone to being struck by mobile plant while staying in these operating zones."

Pursuant to the general duty provisions of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance, employers shall provide safe working environments, safe plant and systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the above provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for six months.

During the first two weeks of the operation, the LD inspected a total of 37 new works sites with 217 improvement notices issued and 22 prosecutions initiated. The special enforcement operation is still in progress. The LD will take vigorous enforcement action pursuant to the law if any violation of the occupational safety and health legislation is detected.

The LD reminds contractors and employers to provide plant and devise systems of work for their work activities that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and use the provided personal protective equipment properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.