

Construction Site Safety Pay for Safety Scheme

Purpose

This practice note is intended to encourage stakeholders in the construction industry to take concerted efforts in improving the site safety performance by adopting the “Pay for Safety Scheme” (PFSS). It is considered that the scheme would also enhance the overall efficiency of the construction works.

Background

2. Construction works may entail a variety of high-risk activities. Responsible contractors should adopt safe work practices and provide necessary precautionary measures to ensure construction sites under their charge are safe. Authorized persons, registered structural engineers and registered geotechnical engineers are also required under the Buildings Ordinance to ensure that projects under their supervisions are carried out in a safe manner.

3. Site safety refers to the statutory obligations placed upon contractors under the provisions of relevant legislations. Contractors should, therefore, have allowed for the cost of meeting such obligations in their tenders. However, a separate item dedicated for safety requirements is not included in all tenders for pricing purpose, and hence the sums payable for carrying out safety-related items cannot be identified and valued.

4. The PFSS, introduced in 1996 by the then Works Bureau, is one of the initiatives introduced by the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau (ETWB) to improve the construction site safety in public works projects. The downward trend in the accident rate in public works projects since then have highlighted the importance of a combination of incentives, motivation, commitment, empowerment and partnership in fostering a strong safety culture in the construction industry.

Pay for Safety Scheme

5. Every party involved in a construction project should play their own role to minimize the hazards and risk to safety in the construction activities. It is important to integrate the site safety concept into the overall management responsibilities, to promote safety training for all levels of the parties involved, and to improve safety performance through procurement and contractual arrangement.

6. Under the PFSS, an Employer is obliged to pay the contractor upon the contractor's satisfactory completion of the safety-related items, including training, as vetted and certified by the Employer's representative, at the pre-priced rates set out in the "Site Safety" section in the Bills of Quantities or Schedule of Rates.

7. Key elements and guidelines to implement the PFSS may be modeled on the "Construction Site Safety Manual" issued by the ETWB as posted on its website: www.etwb.gov.hk, and the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Safety Management) Regulation (Cap 59AF). The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Construction Association have also jointly produced four safety management documents for their Safety Partnering Programme launched in June 2005 to promote private sector companies in pursuit of improved site safety performance. Interested parties may approach the associations direct for details. Adjustments to the guidelines given in the above safety documents may be made taking account of the needs of particular companies, nature of works and specific site conditions.

Safety-related Training

8. For your information, contractors are required to provide relevant training to all site workers under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Cap 59) and the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Cap 509). If you wish to obtain the details of the relevant training, such as site specific induction training and tool box training, please visit the websites of the Occupational Safety and Health Training Centre of the Labour Department and the Occupational Safety and Health Council at www.labour.gov.hk and www.oshc.org.hk respectively.

Way Forward

9. Government wishes to improve the safety performance of both private and public sectors in the Hong Kong construction industry to meet the world's best performers' practices. To this end, I would like to appeal to all authorized persons, registered structural engineers and registered geotechnical engineers to encourage and recommend to their clients to adopt PFSS in their construction contracts.


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