

OSH Support for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises through Innovative Solutions – Hong Kong Experience

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ABSTRACT

Objective: While most businesses are facing exceptional challenges during the pandemic, SMEs are particularly affected as they generally lack resources. OSHC has been subsidizing SMEs to acquire appropriate safety training and equipment through the ongoing SME sponsorship schemes. In gist, SMEs need only to pay a small fraction of the PPE costs to get what they need. These schemes provide not only financial aid for purchasing OSH equipment, but also promote innovative solutions for accident prevention and assist SMEs to enhance their safety performance. The introduction of new equipment into the market helps bring down costs. Besides, by facilitating new solutions to the industries, we help them better adapt to new environments and face new challenges. **Method:** To provide adequate and timely OSH support to SMEs in different trades, we proactively identify their OSH needs through regular meetings with stakeholders and review causes of latest industrial accidents. For instances, in view of two serious accidents causing three deaths and six injuries involving work at confined spaces, we immediately reviewed our existing schemes that were relevant and launched an enhanced subsidy scheme and an accreditation scheme to enhance safety capabilities of the trade within months from the accidents. **Result:** A holistic approach was adopted that not only provided subsidies for purchasing advanced safety and rescue equipment, but also free safety training and consultancy services and audits on their safety management system. The existence of such schemes serve as reminders and help OSHC to remain vigilant and versatile in supporting SMEs' safe work.

Keywords: Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Innovative Solutions, safety capabilities. safety and rescue equipment
