

## **Employment**

*The Government facilitates employment, safeguards workers' rights and benefits, ensures workplaces are safe and healthy, and promotes harmonious employer-employee relations.*

Hong Kong's hard-working, adaptable workforce is one of its most valuable assets and a key contributor to the city's economic competitiveness. The labour market improved in 2012, but the continuing uncertain global economic situation presents challenges which the Government has taken steps to meet. These include upgrading workers' skills to make them more employable and competitive, improving the business environment, introducing measures to create jobs and enhancing labour market efficiency.

During 2012, the Employees Retraining Board offered over 130,000 training places to help in-service workers to upgrade their skills, and to help those seeking job change and the unemployed to re-enter the labour market. The Government also continued to offer special help to the less competitive workers.

The Labour Department assists job seekers to enter or re-enter the labour market through a number of employment initiatives, including the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged, the Pilot Employment Navigator Programme, the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme, the Youth Employment Start, the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme for job seekers with disabilities, and job fairs.

The Government promotes harmonious employer-employee relations, protects employees' rights and benefits, and safeguards employees' safety and health at work.

### **Labour Market Situation**

Hong Kong's labour force comprised 3.79 million people in 2012, representing a rise of 2.2 per cent over 2011. Among the labour force in 2012, 52.1 per cent were men and 47.9 per cent were women.

The majority, or 88.4 per cent, of people employed were in the service sectors: 32 per cent in the import/export, wholesale and retail trades, and accommodation (covering hotels, guesthouses, boarding houses and other establishments providing short-term accommodation) and food services; 25.6 per cent in public administration, and social and personal services; 19.2 per cent in financing and insurance, real estate, and professional and business services; and 11.5 per cent in transportation, storage, postal and courier services, and information and communications. Only 3 per cent worked in the manufacturing sector.

### ***Employment Situation***

The labour market showed further improvement in 2012. The overall unemployment rate fell from 3.4 per cent in 2011 to 3.3 per cent in 2012, while the underemployment rate also declined from 1.7 per cent in 2011 to 1.5 per cent in 2012. Total employment rose by about 84,300, from 3,576,400 in 2011 to 3,660,700 in 2012.

### ***Employment Earnings***

In 2012, 12.5 per cent of people with jobs earned less than \$5,000 a month, while the percentage of people earning \$30,000 and above was 16. The median monthly employment earnings rose by \$700 from \$11,300 in 2011 to \$12,000 in 2012. In 2012, the median monthly employment earnings for higher skilled workers such as managers and administrators, professionals and associate professionals, was \$23,000, while those with lower skills was \$9,000.

### ***Wages***

Owing to buoyant demand in the labour market, wage rates as measured by the Nominal Wage Index for workers up to supervisory level increased by 5.1 per cent between December 2011 and December 2012. After discounting changes in consumer prices, wage rates showed an increase of 0.9 per cent in real terms.

### ***Labour Administration and Services***

The Labour Department, headed by the Commissioner for Labour, formulates and implements labour policies; enforces labour legislation; provides free employment services to employers and job seekers; promotes harmonious labour relations and responsible trade unionism; safeguards employees' rights and benefits; and promotes the occupational safety, health and welfare of the workforce.

### ***Labour Legislation***

The Labour Department administers Hong Kong's labour laws. Labour legislation, supplemented by administrative measures, provides the basis for the enforcement of employers' and employees' rights and obligations, and enables Hong Kong to meet internationally-accepted labour standards.

In 2012, the General Holidays Ordinance and the Employment Ordinance were amended to change the day to be substituted as a general holiday and statutory holiday where any of the first three days of a Lunar New Year, or the day following the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, fell on a Sunday. The Protection of Wages on Insolvency Ordinance was also amended to expand

the scope of the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund to cover pay for untaken annual leave and statutory holidays under the Employment Ordinance.

The Employees' Compensation Ordinance, the Pneumoconiosis and Mesothelioma (Compensation) Ordinance and the Occupational Deafness (Compensation) Ordinance were amended with effect from 21 July 2012 to increase the amount for 15 compensation items payable in cases involving death, permanent incapacity or occupational deafness.

In addition, the levy rate under the Pneumoconiosis and Mesothelioma (Compensation) Ordinance imposed on construction operations and quarry products was lowered with effect from 20 August 2012.

There were 5,136 prosecutions for breaches of various ordinances and regulations administered by the Labour Department in 2012, resulting in fines totalling more than \$19.67 million.

### ***International Labour Affairs***

Hong Kong applies 41 international labour conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). These conventions set standards that have a significant bearing on the formulation of Hong Kong's labour laws.

Hong Kong continued to participate actively in ILO activities during the year, keeping itself abreast of international labour issues. In June, a team comprising representatives of employers, employees and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government attended the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference as part of the China delegation.

### ***Labour Advisory Board***

The Labour Advisory Board, a representative tripartite consultative body, advises the Commissioner for Labour on labour matters and ILO conventions and recommendations. It is chaired by the Commissioner for Labour and comprises six members representing employers and six representing employees.

Five standing committees of the board deal separately with employees' compensation, employment services, occupational safety and health, labour relations and implementation of international labour standards. A working group under the board deals with applications for labour importation under the Supplementary Labour Scheme.

### **Employment Services**

The Labour Department provides a wide range of free employment and recruitment services to job seekers and employers through 12 job centres (including a one-stop employment and training centre), two recruitment centres for the catering and retail industries, a Telephone Employment Service Centre and a Job Vacancy Processing Centre. Round-the-clock employment services are also provided through the Interactive Employment Service website ([www.jobs.gov.hk](http://www.jobs.gov.hk)), which recorded over 0.37 billion page views in 2012, or an average page view of 1.02 million per day. The department also organises large-scale and district-based job fairs to help job seekers find jobs, and employers recruit workers. For major closure or

retrenchment cases, the department sets up a telephone hotline and special counters at job centres to provide priority job referral services for the workers affected.

In 2012, 99,812 job seekers registered with the Labour Department and there were 145,017 job placements. The department also recorded 1,144,424 private sector vacancies, an all-time high figure and an increase of 27.1 per cent when compared with 2011.

### ***Employment Programme for the Middle-aged***

In 2012, 2,500 middle-aged job seekers were employed under this Government programme, which gives employers who engage eligible middle-aged people and provide them with on-the-job training a training allowance of \$2,000 per month per trainee for three to six months.

### ***Work Trial Scheme***

In 2012, 461 job seekers with exceptional difficulties in finding jobs took part in a 'Work Trial Scheme' run by the Labour Department. On completion of the one-month trial, each participant receives \$6,000 from the Labour Department, of which \$500 is paid by the organisation the participant served.

### ***Pilot Employment Navigator Programme***

This two-year project started in December 2010. Participants who secure employment that meets the programme's requirements after receiving the department's employment consultation services are given a maximum cash incentive of \$5,000 if they stay in the job for at least three months. In 2012, 3,672 job seekers joined the programme.

### ***Employment in One-stop***

This one-stop employment and training centre in Tin Shui Wai provides employment and training to needy job seekers, including unemployed able-bodied recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, a scheme to help people who cannot help themselves financially. The centre provides services and facilities, such as case management and employment support services, that are currently not available at other Labour Department job centres. In 2012, 53,287 job seekers made use of the centre's services and facilities.

### ***Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme***

This scheme helps low-income earners reduce their cost of travelling to and from work and encourages them to secure or stay in employment. Depending on their monthly working hours, workers are given a subsidy of \$600 or \$300 a month. As at December 2012, 37,585 workers had received the subsidy since the scheme started in October 2011. A mid-term review of the scheme was completed during the year.

### ***Helping Persons with Disabilities Find Jobs***

The Labour Department's Selective Placement Division helps persons with disabilities who are fit for open employment to seek jobs in the employment market. It provides free employment counselling and placement services to formerly mentally ill persons and persons with hearing or visual impairment, physical handicap, chronic illness, autism, intellectual disability, specific learning difficulties and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, etc. In 2012, the division

launched various employment and promotional programmes, registered 2,686 job seekers with disabilities and secured 2,512 job placements.

The Labour Department's 'Work Orientation and Placement Scheme' improves employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by paying an allowance to encourage employers to provide jobs and employment support. Employers participating in the scheme receive a financial incentive of not more than \$4,000 per month from the Labour Department for a maximum period of six months. In 2012, there were 551 job placements under the scheme.

### **Preparing People for Work**

#### ***Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YPTP&YWETS)***

The YPTP&YWETS provides a full range of pre-employment and on-the-job training lasting between six and 12 months for young school leavers aged between 15 and 24 with educational attainment up to sub-degree level. Over the years, the YPTP&YWETS has established an effective platform for Government departments, employers and non-governmental organisations to work together to help young people enhance their employability, improve their job search skills and secure employment. Over 9,400 young school leavers enrolled on the programme in 2011-12.

#### ***Youth Employment Support***

The Labour Department operates two youth employment resource centres called 'Youth Employment Start' to offer one-stop advisory and support services to young people aged between 15 and 29 to improve their chances of employment, and to help them secure sustainable employment or self-employment. In 2012, the two centres provided services to 73,758 young people.

#### ***Employees Retraining Board***

The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) is a statutory body set up under the Employees Retraining Ordinance. Its members include employer and employee representatives, people in the fields of vocational training, retraining and manpower planning, and government officials. The ERB provides, under its 'Manpower Development Scheme', market-driven training and employment support services through about 130 appointed training bodies, operating some 420 training centres across Hong Kong. People aged 15 or above with education attainment up to sub-degree level may enrol on its full-time placement-tied skills training and part-time generic skills training courses or courses under the 'Skills Upgrading Scheme Plus'. As at December 2012, there were about 870 courses covering 28 industries.

The ERB runs a 'Youth Training Programme' to help youths aged between 15 and 20 to regain an interest in learning and to plan and develop their careers. In 2012, the ERB launched the 'Employment Set Sail for Youth' courses to provide secondary school graduates with training in vocational skills and assist them to acquire recognised qualifications. The ERB also provides training and employment support to other groups, including new arrivals, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, people who have recovered from work injuries and occupational diseases, and rehabilitated ex-offenders.

The ERB's 'Smart Living Scheme' refers ERB graduates to people needing their services which include domestic help, post-natal care, infant and child care, elderly care, escort for outpatients, care for discharged and hospital patients, and healthcare massage.

The ERB also attaches great importance to improving workers' chances of employment by providing them with training in generic skills, such as workplace language, business numeracy, IT applications, personal attributes and job search skills.

The ERB operates three service centres in Kowloon East, Kowloon West and Tin Shui Wai to provide people in those districts with training and employment support. The ERB ensures its training courses meet the standards set by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications for recognition under the Qualifications Framework. The ERB's main income comes from the 'Employees Retraining Levy', collected from employers of imported workers, including foreign domestic helpers. The levy goes to the Employees Retraining Fund (ERF), which is administered by the ERB. Since the levy was temporarily suspended on 1 August 2008, the ERB has relied mainly on the remaining funds in the ERF to support its operations.

### **Continuing Education Fund**

The Government's 'Continuing Education Fund (CEF)' subsidises continuing studies for adults. On completion of a CEF approved course, eligible applicants receive reimbursement equal to 80 per cent of the fees paid, capped at \$10,000 per person. More than 38,000 applications to open CEF accounts were approved in 2012.

### **Labour Relations**

In 2012, the Labour Department's Labour Relations Division handled 79 trade disputes and 18,920 employment claims. The total was 5 per cent higher than in 2011. In cases where the department provided conciliation services, 73.2 per cent were settled. There was one work stoppage during the year, resulting in a loss of 375 working days, or an average loss of 0.12 working days per 1,000 salaried employees and wage earners, one of the lowest in the world.

The Labour Department organises a variety of activities such as seminars, talks and roving exhibitions, and distributes free publications and promotional materials to enhance public understanding of the Employment Ordinance, good labour management measures and family-friendly employment practices. Information is also disseminated through the department's website and the media.

The department has set up nine industry-based committees (catering, construction, theatre, logistics, property management, printing, hotel and tourism, cement and concrete, and retail industries) to promote tripartite dialogue and co-operation at the industry level among employers, employees and the Government. Each committee provides an effective forum for members to discuss issues relevant to the particular industry.

The department has also established 18 human resources managers' clubs where experience-sharing sessions and briefings are held for members to promote good labour management practices and effective employer-employee communication.

**Trade Unions**

The Registry of Trade Unions administers the Trade Unions Ordinance and promotes good and responsible trade union management. Once registered, a trade union becomes a body corporate and enjoys immunity from certain civil suits.

In 2012, 15 new unions were registered, bringing the number of registered trade unions to 849, comprising 800 employee unions, 18 employers' associations and 31 mixed organisations of employees and employers. There are also eight registered trade union federations. Declared membership of employee unions over the past five years has remained at around 740,000. The trade union participation rate (the percentage of salaried employees and wage earners who are union members) was around 22 per cent over the same period.

About half of the employee unions are affiliated to four major labour organisations: the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions (184 unions), the Hong Kong and Kowloon Trades Union Council (28 unions), the Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions (74 unions), and the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (80 unions).

**Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board**

The Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board determines claims arising from disputes of statutory or contractual rights of employment that involve not more than 10 claimants in each case and for sums not exceeding \$8,000 per claimant. In 2012, the board dealt with 1,561 claims and granted awards amounting to \$3.08 million.

**Labour Tribunal**

The Labour Tribunal is part of the Judiciary and is a quick, inexpensive and informal channel for adjudicating labour disputes that are not within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board. In 2012, some 4,744 cases were filed with the tribunal, of which 4,659 were initiated by employees and 85 by employers. Of these, 81.8 per cent were referred to the tribunal by the Labour Department's Labour Relations Division after unsuccessful conciliation attempts. The tribunal dealt with 4,245 cases and granted awards totalling more than \$216 million, or 243 cases and \$21 million more than in 2011.

**Employees' Rights and Benefits**

The Employment Ordinance provides for various employment-related benefits and entitlements to employees. Over and above the statutory requirements, employers and employees are free to negotiate the terms and conditions of employment.

**Labour Conditions**

In general, children under 15 are prohibited by law from taking up employment. Children aged between 13 and 14 may work in non-industrial establishments under strict rules, while young people in the 15-17 age group may work in industrial establishments, subject to restrictions on their working hours.

Labour inspectors conduct workplace inspections to ensure employers' compliance with laws safeguarding workers' rights and benefits, and that employers have employees' compensation

insurance. Labour inspectors also check employees' proof of identity and collaborate with the Police and the Immigration Department to combat illegal employment. During the year, 241 joint operations were carried out by the three departments.

### ***Enforcement against Wage Offences***

The Labour Department takes strict enforcement action against employers who fail to pay wages due to their employees and takes active steps to prevent wage defaults. The department secured 525 convictions for wage offences during the year. One employer was given a suspended sentence and two employers were ordered to perform community service as a result of wage defaults.

In addition, employers who wilfully and without reasonable excuse fail to pay wages or other entitlements awarded by the Labour Tribunal or Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board, are liable to criminal prosecution under the Employment Ordinance. In 2012, the department secured 75 convictions for failures to pay awards made by the Labour Tribunal or Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board. One employer was ordered to perform community service.

### ***Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund***

The Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund, with income mainly from an annual levy of \$450 imposed on each business registration certificate, provides ex gratia payments to employees owed wages and other termination compensation by insolvent employers. The fund covers up to \$36,000 for four months' arrears of wages, \$22,500 for one month's wages in lieu of notice and \$50,000 plus 50 per cent of any entitlement in excess for severance payment. With the commencement of the Protection of Wages on Insolvency (Amendment) Ordinance 2012 on 29 June 2012, the fund further covers pay for untaken annual leave not exceeding the last two leave years and pay for untaken statutory holidays not exceeding the last four months, up to \$10,500. The maximum amount of ex gratia payment for each eligible worker is \$289,000.

In 2012, the fund received 2,976 applications for ex gratia payment, paid out \$64 million to 2,887 applicants, and recorded a surplus of \$528 million.

### ***Employees' Compensation***

Hong Kong's employees' compensation regime follows the 'no-fault' principle, whereby compensation is payable regardless of whether the injury, occupational disease or death is due to the employee's fault. The Employees' Compensation Ordinance covers injuries or death caused by accidents arising from, and in the course of, employment or by specified occupational diseases. An employer must be in possession of a valid insurance policy to cover his liabilities both under the ordinance and the common law.

The Labour Department assists injured employees and the families of deceased employees to obtain compensation from their employers under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance. It also provides interest-free loans to workers injured in job-related accidents. During the year, the Labour Department delivered talks, distributed leaflets, and made announcements on TV, radio and public transport to help employers and employees better understand their rights and obligations under the ordinance. An 'Employees Compensation Assistance Scheme' helps



injured employees, or family members of deceased employees to obtain compensation from defaulting employers. The scheme is financed by a levy imposed on all employees' compensation insurance policies taken out by employers.

Pneumoconiosis and/or mesothelioma sufferers are eligible for compensation under the Pneumoconiosis and Mesothelioma (Compensation) Ordinance administered by the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board. Those diagnosed to have contracted pneumoconiosis before the ordinance became effective in 1981 may apply for ex gratia benefits from the Government under the Pneumoconiosis Ex Gratia Scheme. As at 31 December 2012, 1,806 pneumoconiosis and/or mesothelioma sufferers were receiving payments under either the ordinance or the ex gratia scheme. Family members of 71 pneumoconiosis and/or mesothelioma sufferers who died from the diseases were also granted compensation during the year.

The 'Occupational Deafness Compensation Board' administers the Occupational Deafness Compensation Scheme which provides compensation for persons employed in specified noisy occupations who suffer hearing loss as a result of prolonged exposure to excessive noise at work, and the reimbursement of expenditure incurred on hearing assistive devices. In 2012, the board approved 173 compensation applications and paid out \$9.23 million in compensation. It also approved 524 applications for hearing assistive devices, costing \$1.82 million, and provided 290 rehabilitation programmes for people with impaired hearing caused by their jobs.

### ***Retirement Protection***

All employees, except those who are not required by law to join a local retirement scheme, are provided with some form of retirement protection under the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Ordinance or other retirement schemes, such as those regulated under the Occupational Retirement Schemes Ordinance and other statutory pension plans.

### ***Statutory Minimum Wage***

Low-income employees have enjoyed a marked improvement in pay since the introduction of the statutory minimum wage (SMW) in May 2011. In 2012, the Labour Department organised various publicity activities to familiarise the community with the SMW legislation and labour inspectors visited businesses throughout Hong Kong to make sure employers were complying with the law.

The Minimum Wage Commission (MWC) is an independent statutory body established under the Minimum Wage Ordinance. Its main function is to recommend the SMW rate to the Chief Executive in Council when required by the Chief Executive to do so. In October 2012, the MWC submitted a recommendation to increase the SMW rate from \$28 per hour to \$30 per hour. That was accepted by the Government and, subject to the Legislative Council's approval of the relevant subsidiary legislation, the revised SMW rate will take effect from 1 May 2013, that is the Labour Day.

### ***Employment Agencies***

The Employment Agencies Administration Office enforces Part XII of the Employment Ordinance and the Employment Agency Regulations which empower it to issue licences to

employment agencies, monitor and investigate complaints, and prosecute. The office issued 2,346 employment agency licences and revoked two during the year.

### ***Policy Study on Standard Working Hours***

In November, the Labour Department released its report of the Policy Study on Standard Working Hours, covering the systems and experience of other places in regulating working hours, the latest working hours statistics of Hong Kong employees in various sectors, and an assessment of the possible impact of introducing standard working hours in Hong Kong. The study will provide a good foundation for public discussion.

## **Entry of Non-locals for Employment**

### ***Employment of Professionals***

People who possess special skills, knowledge or experience of value to Hong Kong may apply to take up employment in Hong Kong if they have secured a job that cannot be filled readily by local workers and receive a remuneration package broadly commensurate with those in the market. In 2012, 36,730 people from more than 100 countries or territories were admitted for employment in this way. Business people and entrepreneurs who can make a substantial contribution to the economy are also welcome to bring capital and expertise to Hong Kong.

### ***Employment of Non-local Students***

Non-local graduates of full-time locally-accredited degree or higher level studies may apply to stay in Hong Kong for one year after graduation to take up employment. Those who have previously obtained a degree or higher qualification in a full-time and locally-accredited programme in Hong Kong may also apply to return to Hong Kong for employment if the job they have secured is at a level normally taken up by degree-holders and remunerated at market rates.

### ***Supplementary Labour Scheme***

Under the Supplementary Labour Scheme, employers may apply to import workers to fill vacancies at technician level or below. The Government's policy on labour importation is based on two principles:

- local workers must be given priority in filling job vacancies available in the job market; and
- employers who are genuinely unable to recruit local workers to fill their vacancies should be allowed to import workers.

All applications made under the scheme are considered on a case-by-case basis. To ensure priority of employment for local workers, employers must undertake a four-week open recruitment for each application before it goes to the Labour Advisory Board for consideration and to the Government for a decision. The requirements of open recruitment are: advertising in newspapers, job-matching by the Labour Department and, if appropriate, organising retraining courses for local workers with the assistance of the Employees Retraining Board.

As at December 2012, 2,415 imported workers were working in Hong Kong under the scheme.

### ***Foreign Domestic Helpers***

Foreign domestic helpers may be admitted, subject to immigration control, if they have relevant working experience and their employers are Hong Kong residents who will offer the terms of employment stipulated in the standard employment contract prescribed by the Government. The terms of employment include free and suitable accommodation, free food or food allowance in lieu, wages not lower than the minimum allowable wage set by the Government, free passage from and to the helper's place of origin and free medical treatment. Employers must also meet the required levels of income or assets.

As at December 2012, there were 312,395 foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong, an increase of 4.1 per cent from 2011. The Philippines and Indonesia respectively accounted for 49.9 per cent and 47.8 per cent of the number of foreign domestic helpers.

### **Occupational Safety and Health**

The Labour Department continues to improve safety and health standards in the workplace through inspection and enforcement, publicity and promotion, and education and training. Safety and health at work in Hong Kong has improved considerably in the last decade as a result of the concerted effort of employers, employees, contractors, safety practitioners and the Government.

In 2012, there were 39,907 occupational injuries, a drop of 5 per cent from the 42,022 cases a decade ago. Over the same period, the number of industrial accidents fell from 17,249 to 12,547, a decrease of 27.3 per cent. In 2012, a total of 280 cases of occupational diseases were confirmed.

### ***Inspection and Enforcement***

The Labour Department inspects workplaces regularly to ensure compliance with occupational safety and health laws, particularly in high-risk industries and organisations with poor safety records. The department also conducts special enforcement operations targeting accident-prone workplaces and trades, such as new works construction sites, repair, maintenance, alteration and addition (RMAA) works sites, waste treatment workplaces, logistics, cargo and container handling workplaces, and food and beverages services activities, etc. The department also stepped up enforcement in the summer to protect outdoor workers from heat strokes.

In 2012, the department served 1,699 Improvement Notices on companies and organisations, ordering them to improve safety conditions at their workplaces promptly, and 704 Suspension Notices on those where work activities or the use of plant or substances posed imminent risks of death or serious bodily injury to employees. The courts heard 2,240 cases, convicting the defendants in 82.6 per cent of these and handing down penalties totalling \$14.22 million.

### ***Promotion and Education***

The department, in collaboration with the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC), continued a large-scale two-year publicity programme to enhance safety awareness among contractors and workers in the construction industry. The department held a Construction Safety Forum to consider measures to enhance the occupational safety of the construction

sector. It continued to promote the Occupational Safety Charter and Workplace Hygiene Charter which urge employers and employees to maintain a safe and healthy environment at their workplaces, and organised safety award schemes for the construction and catering industries.

During 2012, the Labour Department held over 770 courses and talks for some 15,400 employees to help them better understand the occupational safety and health laws. Some 39,600 people attended the department's more than 1,200 health talks. The department collaborated with the OSHC, employers' associations and trade unions in the catering industry to help prevent work-related leg disorders and carbon monoxide poisoning to kitchen workers. The department also collaborated with the OSHC, the Construction Industry Council, and relevant employers' associations and workers' unions to publicise heat stroke prevention measures in construction sites and other outdoor workplaces.

### **Occupational Health Clinics**

The Labour Department provides occupational health services to workers at its occupational health clinics in Kwun Tong and Fanling, and some 13,000 clinical consultations with workers were held in 2012.

### **Occupational Safety and Health Council**

The OSHC promotes occupational safety and health in Hong Kong through training, promotions, consultancy, research and information services. In 2012, 1,999 courses on occupational safety and health were held, attended by 44,773 trainees. With the launching of 10 major infrastructure projects, the OSHC introduced a new series of courses targeting high-risk operations. To harness the latest electronic teaching technology, interactive electronic learning platforms and simulated learning software programmes were developed. An electronic examination system was implemented to enhance effectiveness and provide detailed analysis of data collected.

In collaboration with the Labour Department, the 'OSH Star Enterprise – Pilot Scheme on RMAA Safety Accreditation' was launched to encourage the RMAA sector to take practicable safety measures to improve the work environment and reduce occupational injuries. The scheme helped insurers to identify safety-conscious contractors and provide them with discounted premiums for employees' compensation insurance. In addition, the OSHC gave technical advice and financial support for procuring safety equipment to small and medium sized enterprises (SME). Other SME sponsorship schemes were launched to enhance catering safety and electrical works safety.

In partnership with government departments and relevant organisations, the OSHC conducted various promotional activities to enhance construction safety, and promoted occupational health for professional drivers, including the prevention of musculoskeletal disorders and heat stroke at work. The OSHC also developed teaching material for secondary schools and worked closely with District Councils and local organisations to promote the 'Safe Community' programme advocated by the World Health Organisation.

**Websites**

Labour and Welfare Bureau: [www.lwb.gov.hk](http://www.lwb.gov.hk)

Education Bureau: [www.edb.gov.hk](http://www.edb.gov.hk)

Security Bureau: [www.sb.gov.hk](http://www.sb.gov.hk)

Labour Department: [www.labour.gov.hk](http://www.labour.gov.hk)

Occupational Safety and Health Council: [www.oshc.org.hk](http://www.oshc.org.hk)

Immigration Department: [www.immd.gov.hk](http://www.immd.gov.hk)

Employees Retraining Board: [www.erb.org](http://www.erb.org)

Census and Statistics Department: [www.censtatd.gov.hk](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk)