

## Chapter 6

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# 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 among its most valued resources and a key contributing factor to the city's economic competitiveness. The labour market further improved in 2013, but the continuing uncertain global economic situation presents challenges which the government has adopted various strategies 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.

In 2013, 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 Work Trial Scheme, the Youth Employment and Training Programme, 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 totalled 3.86 million people in 2013, representing a rise of 1.9 per cent over 2012. In 2013, 51.6 per cent of the labour force were men and 48.4 per cent were women.

The majority, or 88.3 per cent, were employed in the service sectors: 31.6 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; 25.9 per cent in public administration, and social and personal services; 19.3 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 2.9 per cent worked in the manufacturing sector.

### **Employment Situation**

The overall unemployment rate rose from 3.3 per cent in 2012 to 3.4 per cent in 2013, while the underemployment rate was 1.5 per cent in 2013, the same as that in 2012. Total employment rose by about 67,200, from 3,660,700 in 2012 to 3,728,000 in 2013.

### **Employment Earnings**

In 2013, 13 per cent of people with jobs earned less than \$5,000 a month, while the percentage of people earning \$30,000 and above was 17. The median monthly employment earnings rose by \$1,000 from \$12,000 in 2012 to \$13,000 in 2013. In 2013, the median monthly employment earnings for higher skilled workers such as managers and administrators, professionals and associate professionals, was \$25,000, while those with lower skills was \$10,000.

### **Wages**

Owing to a tight labour market and upward adjustment of the Statutory Minimum Wage (SMW) rate in May 2013, wage rates as measured by the Nominal Wage Index for workers up to supervisory level increased by 4.1 per cent between December 2012 and December 2013. After discounting changes in consumer prices, wage rates showed a decrease of 0.2 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.

The Minimum Wage Ordinance was amended to increase the SMW rate by 7.1 per cent to \$30 per hour with effect from 1 May.

The Business Registration Ordinance was also amended to reduce the rate of Business Registration Certificate levy which finances the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund with effect from 19 July.

There were 4,646 prosecutions for breaches of various ordinances and regulations administered by the Labour Department in 2013, resulting in fines totalling more than \$21.22 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 in 2013, 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 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference as part of the People's Republic of 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 0.38 billion page views in 2013, or an average page view of 1.04 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 will set up a telephone hotline and special counters at job centres to provide priority job referral services for the workers affected.

In 2013, 82,748 job seekers registered with the Labour Department and there were 156,727 job placements. The department also recorded 1,216,735 private sector vacancies, an all-time high figure and an increase of 6.3 per cent when compared with 2012.

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

In 2013, 2,562 middle-aged job seekers were employed under this programme, which gives employers who engage eligible middle-aged people and provide them with on-the-job training a training allowance of \$3,000 per month per employee for three to six months.

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

In 2013, 345 job seekers with special difficulties in finding jobs took part in the Work Trial Scheme. On completion of the one-month trial, each participant receives \$6,400 from the Labour Department, of which \$500 is paid by the organisation the participant served.

### ***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 that helps people with financial difficulties. 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 2013, 71,652 job seekers made use of the centre's services and facilities.

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

This scheme (started in October 2011) helps low-income earners reduce their cost of travelling to and from work and encourages them to secure or stay in employment. As at end-2013, 63,974 workers had received the subsidy. From the claim months of 2013, applicants could choose to apply on an individual or household basis, benefiting more grassroots workers.

### ***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 2013, the division launched various employment and promotional programmes, registered 2,605 job seekers with disabilities and secured 2,461 job placements.

The 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. Starting from June, an employer who employs a person with disabilities having employment difficulties is entitled to an allowance of up to \$5,500 per month for the first two months of employment. After the first two months, the employer is entitled to an allowance of up to \$4,000 per month for a maximum of six months. In 2013, there were 661 job placements made under the scheme.

## **Preparing People for Work**

### ***Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP)***

The YETP (formerly known as the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme) provides a full range of pre-employment and on-the-job training for young school leavers aged between 15 and 24 with educational attainment up to sub-degree level. The YETP has established an effective platform for government departments, employers and non-governmental organisations to work together to help young people

enhance their employability, improve job search skills and secure employment. In 2012-13, 8,095 young school leavers enrolled on the programme.

### ***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 2013, the two centres provided services to 74,850 young people.

### ***Employees Retraining Board (ERB)***

The ERB is a statutory body set up under the Employees Retraining Ordinance. Its members include employer and employee representatives, people connected with vocational training and retraining or manpower planning, and public officers. The ERB provides, under its Manpower Development Scheme, market-driven training and employment support services through about 110 appointed training bodies, operating around 410 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 courses and part-time or evening generic skills training courses or courses under the 'Skills Upgrading Scheme Plus'. As at December 2013, there were over 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 their careers. The ERB also offers 'Employment Set Sail for Youth' courses to provide secondary school graduates with training in vocational skills and assist them to acquire recognised qualifications. In 2013, the ERB launched on a pilot basis the 'Specialised Security Services Training Programme' and the 'Youth Management Trainee Programme' to enhance young people's employment opportunities.

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 rehabilitated ex-offenders.

The ERB's 'Smart Living Scheme' refers ERB graduates providing services such as domestic help, elderly care, escort for outpatients, care for discharged and hospital patients, and healthcare massage. In 2013, ERB launched the 'Smart Baby Care Scheme' to handle vacancies for post-natal care and infant and child care services on a centralised basis.

Apart from training in vocational skills, ERB also attaches great importance to improving workers' employment opportunities by providing them with training in generic skills, such as workplace languages, business numeracy, IT applications, personal attributes and job search skills. In 2013, the ERB launched new courses covering work ethics and conduct, communication skills, emotion management, etc.

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 strives to

ensure the quality of its training courses, and that the courses are recognised under the Qualifications Framework.

### **Continuing Education Fund (CEF)**

The government's CEF subsidises continuing studies for adults. On completion of a CEF approved course, eligible applicants receive reimbursement of 80 per cent of the fees paid, capped at \$10,000 per person. More than 33,000 applications to open CEF accounts were approved in 2013.

### **Labour Relations**

In 2013, the Labour Department's Labour Relations Division handled 70 trade disputes and 17,515 employment claims. The total was 7.4 per cent lower than 2012. In cases where the department provided conciliation services, more than 70 per cent were settled. The department handled seven strikes which resulted in a loss of 13,437 working days (12,700 working days were attributed to a single strike taken place between March and May), or an average loss of 4.15 working days per 1,000 salaried employees and wage earners. Despite this, Hong Kong's number of working days lost due to strike remains one of the lowest in the world.

The Labour Department promotes the Employment Ordinance, good labour management and family-friendly employment practices through various activities such as seminars, talks, an online quiz and roving exhibitions. Information is also disseminated through free publications, the internet and the media.

To foster tripartite dialogue and co-operation at the industry level among employers, employees and the government, the department has set up nine industry-based committees (covering catering, construction, theatre, logistics, property management, printing, hotel and tourism, cement and concrete, and retail). These committees provide effective forums for members to discuss issues of common concern to their industries.

The department has also established 18 human resources managers' clubs. Experience-sharing sessions and briefings are held for members to promote enlightened 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 2013, 14 new unions were registered, bringing the number of registered trade unions to 858, comprising 809 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 760,000. The trade union participation rate (the percentage of salaried employees and wage earners who are union members) was around 23 per cent for 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 (77 unions), and the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (81 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 2013, the board dealt with 1,523 claims and granted awards amounting to \$3.02 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 2013, 4,154 cases were filed with the tribunal, of which 4,083 were initiated by employees and 71 by employers. Of these, 88.9 per cent were referred to the tribunal by the Labour Department's Labour Relations Division after unsuccessful conciliation attempts. The tribunal dealt with 4,000 cases and granted awards totalling more than \$212 million, or 245 cases and \$4 million less than those in 2012.

### ***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 taken out employees' compensation insurance. Labour inspectors also check employees' proof of identity and collaborate with the Police and the Immigration Department to combat illegal employment. In 2013, 210 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 443 convictions for wage offences in 2013. One employer was sentenced to immediate imprisonment, two company directors were given suspended sentences and two other company directors 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 2013, the department secured 127 convictions for failures to pay awards made by the Labour Tribunal or Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board. Two company directors were ordered to perform community service.

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

The Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund provides ex gratia payments to employees who are owed wages and other termination compensation by insolvent employers. The maximum amount of ex gratia payment for each eligible employee is \$289,000, which covers up to \$36,000 for four months' arrears of wages, \$22,500 for one month's wages in lieu of notice, \$50,000 plus 50 per cent of any entitlement in excess for severance payment and \$10,500 for not exceeding two leave years' pay for untaken annual leave and/or four months' pay for untaken statutory holidays. The fund is mainly financed by an annual levy imposed on each business registration certificate. The Business Registration Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule 2) Order 2013 reduced the levy rate from \$450 per annum to \$250 per annum from 19 July 2013.

In 2013, the fund received 2,081 applications for ex gratia payment, paid out \$48.5 million to 1,855 applicants, and recorded a surplus of \$470 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 have 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 get compensation from their employers under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance. It also provides interest-free loans to workers injured in job-related accidents. In 2013, 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 get 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 2013, 1,750 pneumoconiosis and/or mesothelioma sufferers were receiving payments under



either the ordinance or the ex gratia scheme. Family members of 76 pneumoconiosis and/or mesothelioma sufferers who died from the diseases were also granted compensation in 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 expenses incurred on hearing assistive devices. In 2013, the board approved 117 compensation applications and paid out \$8.49 million in compensation. It also approved 413 applications to finance hearing assistive devices, costing \$1.31 million, and provided 359 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**

The overall employment market has remained stable since the introduction of the SMW in May 2011. Employment earnings of low-income employees have continued to increase. The new SMW rate of \$30 came into effect on 1 May 2013. The Labour Department organised various publicity activities to promote the new SMW rate and the SMW legislation. Labour inspectors visited businesses throughout Hong Kong to make sure employers were complying with the law.

The main function of the Minimum Wage Commission, an independent statutory body established under the Minimum Wage Ordinance, is to recommend the SMW rate to the Chief Executive in Council when required by the Chief Executive to do so. The commission comprises a Chairperson and 12 members from the labour sector, business community, academia and the government. The commission's new two-year term started in March.

### **Employment Agencies**

The Labour Department 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 department issued 2,718 employment agency licences, revoked three and refused to renew one in 2013.

### **Standard Working Hours**

In April, the government set up the Standard Working Hours Committee, comprising members drawn from the labour and business sectors, academia, the community and government. The committee, appointed for a term of three years, is tasked to follow up on the government's completed policy study on standard working hours, promoting an informed, in-depth and objective discussion on the subject in the community, so as to jointly explore and identify options that suit Hong Kong's needs.

## **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 that offers a remuneration package broadly commensurate with the prevailing market level. In 2013, 36,397 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 local programmes at degree or higher level 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 local 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 the Labour Department 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 ERB.

As at December 2013, 2,976 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 2013, there were 320,988 foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong, an increase of 2.75 per cent from 2012. The Philippines and Indonesia respectively accounted for 51.3 per cent and 46.4 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 efforts of employers, employees, contractors, safety practitioners and the government.

In 2013, there were 38,207 occupational injuries, a drop of 13.6 per cent from the 44,025 cases a decade ago. Over the same period, the number of industrial accidents fell from 17,533 to 11,820, a decrease of 32.6 per cent. In 2013, a total of 198 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 works sites, waste treatment workplaces, logistics, cargo and container handling workplaces, and food and beverages services activities, etc. Enforcement was stepped up in the summer to protect outdoor workers from heat strokes.

In 2013, the department served 1,834 Improvement Notices on companies and organisations, ordering them to improve safety conditions in their workplaces promptly, and 692 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 2,571 cases, convicting the defendants in 81.2 per cent of these and handing down penalties totalling \$16.7 million.

### **Promotion and Education**

The department, in collaboration with the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC), ran a large-scale publicity programme to enhance safety and health awareness among employers and workers. The department held a Work-at-Height Safety Forum and Major Infrastructure Projects Forum to consider measures to enhance relevant occupational safety standards. 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.

In 2013, the Labour Department held over 1,944 courses, lectures and health talks for some 65,223 employees to help them better understand occupational safety and health and the relevant laws. The department collaborated with the OSHC and relevant trade unions to promote healthy living for professional drivers. 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 12,000 clinical consultations with workers were held in 2013.

### **Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC)**

The OSHC promotes occupational safety and health in Hong Kong through training, promotion, consultancy, research and information services. In 2013, 2,032 courses on occupational safety and health were held, attended by 46,696 trainees.

On construction safety, the OSHC carried out large scale publicity campaigns to promote work-at-height and electrical works safety. There were incentive schemes subsidising enterprises to purchase appropriate mobile working platforms and Lockout-Tagout Kit for electrical works. The OSH Star Enterprise – RMAA Safety Accreditation Scheme, launched in 2012, encourages the RMAA ('repair, maintenance, alteration and addition') sector to take practicable safety measures to improve the work environment to reduce occupational injuries. The Employees' Compensation Insurance Residual Scheme Bureau offers insurance premium discounts to accredited contractors, giving them financial incentives to continuously improve their work safety performance. In 2013, the Housing Authority commissioned the OSHC to conduct safety audits of its building maintenance and improvement works contracts.

Other OSHC initiatives in 2013 included a 'Pilot Scheme on Safety Accreditation for Catering Safety', the 'Health@work.hk Project' (with the Department of Health) and the 'Healthy Living for Professional Driver Campaign' (organised jointly with the Labour Department). In addition, the 21st Quadripartite Conference on Occupational Safety and Health and the 7th Regional Safety Quiz were organised in November.

### **Websites**

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

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

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

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

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

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