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Behavior-based safety management in Hong Kong's construction industry

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A behavior-based approach to industrial safety management has been advocated by many authors and has been found to effectively improve safety performance in different industrial settings and on different continents. This paper reports on the implementation of a behavior-based safety management program in the Hong Kong construction industry. The behavior-based safety management techniques of performance measurement, participative goal setting, and the provision of performance feedback were introduced in a carefully controlled field experiment on seven public housing construction sites in Hong Kong. The paper describes this experiment and explains how the program was implemented. The results of the experiment were mixed. Behavior-based safety techniques were highly effective in bringing about improved performance in site housekeeping, but significant improvements in access to heights were only observed on two of the seven sites, and there was found to be no significant improvement in the use of bamboo scaffolding during the experimental intervention. The paper presents these results and discusses factors that may have contributed to the

limited effectiveness of the techniques in the latter two performance categories.



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Dr. Helen Lingard conducted research work in the field of construction site safety for more than 5 years. She has also worked as a consultant, advising both the Hong Kong Government Works Branch and Housing Authority in site safety matters. Following the completion of her PhD, which was awarded for research work in the field of behavior-based safety management, she worked as Area Safety Officer for Costain Building and Civil Engineering Ltd. (Hong Kong).

Dr. Steve Rowlinson is senior lecturer in the Department of Surveying, The University of Hong Kong and has been researching and consulting in the field of construction site safety for more than 7 years. He is a consultant to the Hong Kong Housing Authority and Hong Kong Government Works Branch on safety matters and has authored over 100 reports and papers on safety matters on construction sites.

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