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# Accidents prompt new safety laws for firms

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Companies involved in large-scale construction, repair and maintenance will soon face new safety laws aimed at reducing accidents, the Government announced yesterday.

Any contractor with a project worth more than \$100 million, or employing more than 100 people, will have to implement an internal safety audit-

ing system by the end of this year.

But assistant commissioner for labour William Siu Wai-lam failed to clarify what penalties would be imposed on companies which refused to comply with the new amendment under the Factory and Industrial Undertakings Ordinances.

Mr Siu said safety auditors – who inspect and review a company's safety procedures and

present their findings to executives – would bear much of the new workload.

The auditor would report whether a company had applied the best practices and make recommendations if necessary.

“All corporate procedure is expected to be checked by the safety auditors from start to finish,” Mr Siu said.

“It is like giving them a memo with 10 points. The com-

pany must satisfy all requirements.”

Unionist and legislator Lee Cheuk-yan called for greater worker participation in the safety system. “No safety rule works without input from the workers. I believe a safety committee should be formed, involving workers,” he said.

Meanwhile, Kone Elevators yesterday signed an Occupational Safety Charter with

worker representatives, promising a safe environment in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Kone's decision follows reports which found the Garley Building fire, which killed 40 people in November, began during lift shaft repairs by another company.

About 40,000 industrial accidents have been registered in each of the past two years.

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