

# Making safety a habit

To prevent potential workplace hazards, Wee Chwee Huat Scaffolding & Construction makes safety its first priority

BY JAC WOO

**W**hen one's business involves people working at heights and dealing with high-risk operations such as erecting and dismantling scaffolds, there is no room for safety lapses.

This principle has been a mainstay of Wee Chwee Huat Scaffolding & Construction's workplace safety and health (WSH) practices — and it is paying off.

The company has won bizSAFE awards continuously since 2014, and it is a winner again this year of two accolades — the bizSAFE Enterprise Exemplary Award (Gold) and the bizSAFE Champion Award.

The bizSAFE Enterprise Exemplary Award recognises bizSAFE Level STAR enterprises that have exhibited outstanding WSH performance.

Enterprises that have won the Exemplary Award for three consecutive years will be honoured with a Gold Award, which Wee Chwee Huat is bagging for the second time.

The bizSAFE Champion Award recognises individuals who have been proactive in driving bizSAFE and raising the risk management capabilities of their organisations.

## Learning from case studies

Wee Chwee Huat Scaffolding & Construction has been providing quality scaffold services for the construction industry since 1991.

"We are facing risks constantly in our daily operations, thus it is our responsibility to ensure we reduce the risks that we are exposed to," says Mr V. Manimaran (above, right), 50, the operations manager of the company.

"Safety is our first priority, and it is wise to learn from existing case studies to protect ourselves from any potential hazards," he adds.

Based on his observation of workplace incidents in Singapore in the first half of last year, he noticed that out of five fatal falls that occurred, four of them were due to open sides and fragile surfaces at the workplace.

He explains: "As we also face the potential hazard of open sides, we implemented the 'Sure Safe' method, which is a measure beyond the regulation imposed to counter falling incidents.



PHOTO: TED CHEN

"We also innovated our work processes and brought in engineering control to eliminate falling hazards.

## Involving people and technology

In Wee Chwee Huat, "zero incidents" is to be everyone's personal goal and not just a corporate safety programme slogan.

To do this, the company consulted its workforce when developing its safety procedures and encourages its staff to provide continuous feedback.

"Our staff members have cultivated a mindset that safety is more than just preventing injuries. To them, it is more of a lifestyle, habit and behaviour," says Mr Manimaran.

The company also leverages modern technology to monitor WSH.

"We use the i-safe online software that helps us identify new hazards and risks related to work activities based on the knowledge shared among supervisors working on different sites.

"We have also created various groups in WhatsApp according to the needs of our WSH, so our staff can constantly update one another and the management on the safety processes," he adds.