

Public Education and Advisory Services on Slope Safety

Key Messages: Public education plays two key roles in enhancing slope safety in Hong Kong: (i) to reduce the probability of landslides by reminding the owners to regularly maintain their slopes; (ii) to reduce the consequences of landslides by promoting personal precautionary measures.

Introduction

The Geotechnical Engineering Office (GEO) undertakes public education on slope safety to foster good public understanding and promote public awareness of the landslide risks in Hong Kong. Public education plays two key roles in enhancing slope safety: (1) to reduce the probability of landslides by reminding the owners to maintain their slopes regularly; (2) to reduce the consequences of landslides by promoting personal precautionary measures during heavy rain. In addition, we also promote slope greening to meet the public expectation for a better living environment with “safe and green” slopes. With about one third of the 60 000 sizeable man-made slopes of private responsibility, community involvement is therefore essential.

Promotion of Slope Maintenance to Reduce Landslides

“Safe slopes save lives Keep your slopes safe”

Lack of maintenance is a major contributory factor to many landslides in Hong Kong. Poorly maintained slopes, even those which were designed and constructed to adequate engineering standards, can deteriorate to the point where they may fail and endanger life and property. Private slopes are the responsibility of their respective owners. The GEO has community education programmes to remind private owners of the importance of slope maintenance in preventing landslides. We also provide assistance and advisory service to help owners maintain their slopes.

Promotion of Personal Precautionary Measures in Heavy Rain

“Don’t ignore Landslip Warning Keep away from slopes”

Almost all of the landslide fatalities in the past 30 years in Hong Kong occurred when the Landslip Warning was in force. These fatalities might have been prevented if the public had taken our Landslip Warning messages seriously. That is, when the Landslip Warning is in force, the public should keep away from slopes. People should in general stay at home or remain in a safe shelter, and pay attention to news of weather and other warnings. For residents living close to slopes, stay in rooms on higher floors and/or furthest away from slopes. People should keep vigilant, monitor the situation and watch out for signs of landslide danger closely.

Pedestrians should stay away from slopes and use alternative routes if possible. Motorists should avoid using roads with landslip warning signs. Otherwise, one should drive quickly through the road with safe speed and do not stop unnecessarily.

If people are asked to evacuate by Government officials, or if they believe that their home could

be endangered by landslide, they should leave immediately if condition permits. They should escape by using an exit away from slopes and stay temporarily at a safe shelter (e.g. relatives' home, village office or temporary shelter provided by the District Offices or voluntary agencies).

On-going Public Education Activities

A large variety of public education activities are regularly carried out to widely promulgate our messages on slope safety to every sector of the community. These activities include:

- (i) broadcast of television and radio announcements of public interest (APIs) ;
- (ii) distribution of printed materials and promotional items such as leaflets, posters, guidebooks, etc.;
- (iii) roving exhibitions with information kiosks and game stalls at shopping centres;
- (iv) public seminars, talks and training courses;
- (v) media promotion through press conferences, briefings, radio and TV interviews, and feature stories in newspapers;
- (vi) slope safety talks and exhibitions in schools; and
- (vii) promulgation of useful slope safety and slope maintenance information via the Hong Kong Slope Safety (HKSS) Website (<http://hkss.cedd.gov.hk>) and various social media platforms (including Facebook, Instagram and YouTube)¹ ; and
- (viii) public guided tours at Po Shan Drainage Tunnel – Landslide Sci-Tech Chamber.

Updates of our public education activities can also be found in the HKSS Website or our social media platforms.

¹ The website of the social media platforms
Facebook : GEO Channel - <https://www.facebook.com/hkss.geo>
Instagram : GEO Channel - <https://www.instagram.com/ceddgeohk/>
YouTube : hkslopesafety - <https://www.youtube.com/user/hkslopesafety>

Assistance and Advisory Services to Slope Owners

In addition to the publicity activities, the GEO has a Community Advisory Unit (CAU) to assist and advise private slope owners on how to proceed with slope maintenance, investigation and improvement or upgrading works so as to help them maintain their slopes. The main services of the CAU include giving advice on slope maintenance and “Dangerous Hillside Order” cases, as well as holding slope safety talks, seminars and meet-the-public sessions. The CAU can be contacted at 2760 5800, the Government 24-hour one-stop hotline 1823, or via e-mail at cau@cedd.gov.hk.

The GEO also produces a variety of guides, booklets and leaflets which provide useful information for owners to discharge their slope maintenance responsibilities. These documents can be viewed and downloaded from the Hong Kong Slope Safety (HKSS) website.

A computerized Slope Information System (SIS) has been set up to house the Catalogue of Slopes, which contains useful information of the 60 000 odd sizeable man-made slopes in Hong Kong. The SIS is available in the HKSS website to provide easy and free public access.

For private owners in need, financial assistance is available through the “Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme” which covers slope maintenance and upgrading works, including the investigation and works specified in “Dangerous Hillside Orders”. For details, please call the Building Maintenance Assistance Schemes Hotline: 3188 1188.

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