

HOMEOWNERS in Kuala Lumpur who have applied or are planning to apply for a permit from Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) to carry out renovations must also register with the Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH).

Department director Husdin Che Amat told *StarMetro* that if renovations went beyond six weeks, the owner must be registered with DOSH.

Husdin said the requirement was not just confined to construction sites but included residential units, shophouses and projects where work would span over six weeks.

He said such projects often involved the use of heavy machinery.

"If you know that renovation

'Homeowners must register with DOSH if works go beyond six weeks'

works will extend beyond six weeks, and if equipment like cranes and tractors will be used, then you are bound by the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) 1994 as well as the Factories and Machinery Act 1967," he said, adding that residents who failed to register with DOSH could be hauled up to court.

Husdin said accidents could happen at residential units under construction, and not just at construction sites, hence employers and contractors were bound by OSHA.

Husdin elaborated that home-

owners were also bound by Section 15 and Section 17 of OSHA on the general duties of employers and self-employed persons.

"Section 17 mentions the general duty of employers and self-employed persons other than their employees, who may be affected and exposed to risks to their safety or health," he said.

In other words, Husdin said those affected by their neighbours' renovation project had a right to get their concerns addressed.

"We don't get many complaints from residential units, unless some

mishap happens.

"That does not mean we will not investigate if a genuine complaint is brought to our attention.

"If a complaint is lodged with our department on safety issues, be prepared for a visit from our officers," Husdin warned.

He said it was understandable for people to get worried when a huge crane appeared or scaffolding was set up by the neighbour intending to carry out renovations, especially when there are small children.

"So if anyone feels that their safety or that of their family's are at

risk, I urge them to contact us and we will investigate. And that goes for the workers as well.

"Employers and contractors must also make sure that the workers renovating their homes wear safety gear like helmet and shoes.

"It is common in some places, that the contractors renovating the units stay at the house until work is done.

"And the workers tend to get comfortable and not wear the required safety gear. This is wrong," he said.

StarMetro recently reported that Kuala Lumpur mayor, Datuk Nor Hisham Ahmad Dahlan was mulling the need to review the Building By-laws 1985 and the Uniform Building By-laws to ensure that homeowners completed renovations by a given time.

Nor Hisham had said this was

towards helping affected neighbours, especially those living next door, have peace of mind.

"We have been on our toes the entire year, and almost every day we receive complaints from the public on all sorts of infringement.

"In fact, we are issuing stop-work orders every week now," said Husdin.

The department issued 568 stop work orders in Kuala Lumpur for 2019.

Last year, he said 48 cases in Kuala Lumpur were taken to court resulting in RM277,400 in penalties, and in the same year 473 compounds amounting to RM561,000 were issued against errant employers from various construction sectors.

In 2018, the figure was over RM1mil.

Husdin said there were only around 90 DOSH officers from the technical team empowered to carry out enforcement inspections and trained to carry out on-site investigations on construction accidents.

Husdin did not rule out that there could be more unreported cases out there and hoped that the public would report to DOSH as there were over 6,000 active construction sites in Kuala Lumpur.

The department's lack of manpower makes effective implementation of OSH policies challenging.

"The team is constantly on the ground and we are at times overwhelmed with the workload but it is part and parcel of the job."

DOSH officers, Husdin said were on their toes everyday as they were over 700 commercial projects in Kuala Lumpur.



Husdin Che Amat (left) with his investigation and prosecution officer Abdul Rahim Sabri.