INTRODUCTION

All over the world, construction is one of the most hazardous industries because of the unique nature of each project (Jannadi and Bu-Khamsin, 2002). Developing countries, for example South Africa, have been characterized by poor health and safety performance relative to the situation in other industrial sectors. In 1999, building and construction in South Africa had the third worst fatality rate (0.11) per 1,000 workers after fishing (2.09) and transport (0.14) (Fester and Haupt, 2006). The construction safety record of China is also poor. Every year, there are more than a thousand recorded fatalities on construction sites. It is believed, however, that the figures show only the tip of the iceberg with a large number of unreported fatalities and accidents (Tam et al., 2004).

Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of China where the construction safety management laws and regulations are better developed and implemented. The research reported in this paper is to discover whether Hong Kong’s safety management practices are suitable for Mainland China and other developing countries in order to save lives and improve