

# Hong Kong's construction industry grinds to halt, and union says coronavirus has left 50,000 workers jobless

Tuesday 25 February 2020, by [CHENG Lilian](#) (Date first published: 24 February 2020).

## Contents

- [Construction Industry Employee](#)
- [Construction Employers](#)

*Construction Industry Employees General Union blames supply chain issues caused by shutdown of factories in mainland China.*

*Bosses say another 80,000 workers have had their hours slashed to just one or two days a week.*

## Construction Industry Employees General Union

Some 50,000 construction workers in Hong Kong have lost their jobs since the coronavirus epidemic hit, and **more than 80,000 have had their hours slashed**, a union said on Monday.

The **Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union** said half of its **57,000 members were now unemployed**, a situation it attributed to supply chain issues that had arisen since the outbreak began.

Some **250,000 people** work in the industry in Hong Kong, and the union said a fifth had been laid off while a third of those fortunate enough to still have jobs had been reduced to working one or two days a week.

Wong Ping, the union's chairman, said the coronavirus had forced many factories in mainland China to stay shut until a week ago, affecting the amount of building materials that could be brought into the city.

*"The construction chain intertwines with one another. If we do not have some of the materials, we cannot proceed to the next step," Wong said.*

*"For example, some workers can nail boards first [for shuttering], but without cement pouring in as the next step, you cannot proceed to nail boarding for the other floors."*

Chow Luen-kiu, the union's former chairman, said the inability to ship some prefabricated parts for housing estates to Hong Kong had caused delays in projects.

This was because of border **controls in some mainland cities**, he said.

Although factories across the border have gradually resumed production, there were problems with labour shortages as **many migrant workers could not get back to work as a result of the lockdown** in many mainland cities.

**Public transport and freight forwarding services had also been disrupted.**

## Construction Employers

- Private developer **Chun Wo Construction Holdings** said its building sites had been unable to resume projects as planned.

*"Many of the materials have not been brought in from the mainland, such as concrete blocks, and the factories in China have not resumed totally,"* Stephen Lee Ka-lun, the firm's CEO, said. "It affected all kinds of projects, and it stopped the following procedures.

*"At the same time, we have to separate the workers at the sites to prevent them from getting infected by one another, and that will slow the project speed as well."*

- David Kwok Chun-wai, co-managing director of **New World Construction**, said work at their sites restarted on Monday, but the firm had also suffered from the closure of factories across the border.

*"But we are not sure about the impact yet, it's still too early to predict any delays in finishing time,"* he added.

- Electrical and mechanical workers have also been affected, said Rocky Poon Lock-kei, executive director of the **Hong Kong Federation of Electrical and Mechanical Contractors**.

*"But we hope the effects are small and temporary, as factories in China are resuming work again,"* he said.

---

**P.S.**

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/hong-kong-economy/article/3052113/hong-kongs-construction-industry-grinds-halt-and>