

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**DEVB092**

**(Question Serial No. 0159)**

Head: (42) Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): Not specified

Programme: (2) Mechanical Installations Safety

Controlling Officer: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (Alfred W H SIT)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

In 2018, the targeted number of inspection for lifts and escalators is estimated as 14 000, which is 18.4% of the number of existing lifts and escalators. It is higher than the actual number of 11 231 in 2017 due to the implementation of modernisation scheme by the Government. In this regard, would the Government advise on the following:

1. What is the estimated expenditure for the modernisation works?
2. In view of the increase in the number of inspections, will there be any increase in the establishment of the EMSD? Are there sufficient competent practitioners at present for carrying out the modernisation works as well as the maintenance and repair works in future?
3. Please advise on the current numbers of competent lift and escalator practitioners and the wastage rate in the past three years.
4. Is there any measure to improve the working environment and remuneration packages of lift and escalator practitioners so as to reduce brain drain and attract new blood? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?
5. Is there any new measure to assist the trade in training new talents? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LO Wai-kwok (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 4)

Reply:

1. There is room for improvement of the performance of aged lifts through modernisation works. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) will step up the promotion of lift and escalator modernisation schemes by strengthening the publicity to Responsible Persons (RPs) and increasing the inspection to lifts and escalators. The estimated additional expenditure in 2018-19 is \$7.3 million.
2. In 2018-19, one Senior Electrical and Mechanical Engineer, two Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, one Electrical Inspector, six Assistant Mechanical Inspectors, two Clerical Assistants and one Executive Officer will be added to the lift and escalator

teams of the EMSD to carry out additional inspections and strengthen the publicity to RPs.

Based on the regular manpower survey results and manpower forecast conducted by the EMSD, it is estimated that there is sufficient practitioners for carrying out the modernisation works as well as the maintenance and repair works in future. The EMSD would continue to monitor the trade manpower and work closely with the trade to ensure adequate manpower supply.

3. The number of lift/escalator practitioners kept on increasing in recent years, although there is some staff wastage. The total numbers of registered lift/escalator engineers and registered lift/escalator workers in 2015, 2016 and 2017 are 5 643, 5 767 and 5 958 respectively. In addition, the numbers of general workers in the trade in these years are 1 452, 1 725 and 1 838 respectively. The rate of registration withdrawal of registered engineers and registered workers are 0.02%, 0.10% and 0.45% respectively in these years.
4. The EMSD has been collaborating with the lift and escalator trade to take forward measures to improve the working environment of lift and escalator practitioners. The EMSD continues to review and update the Code of Practice for Lift Works and Escalator Works with a view to improving the working conditions, such as enhancing the safety requirements and providing better ventilation, lightings, etc. in the working environment. As for the worker's remuneration, following introduction of the new registration system for lift and escalator workers under the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance in late 2012, which replaced the employer-tied registration arrangement, the lift and escalator workers are provided with more flexibility in choosing their jobs and hence better bargaining power in negotiating remuneration packages. The trade provides better remuneration packages in recent years to practitioners to attract new blood and to retain expertise in the trade. The EMSD conducts regular trade survey to monitor the salary level of practitioners. The latest survey results show that the remuneration of registered workers and engineers rose by 6.6% and 8.2% respectively in 2015 and 6.2% and 5.1% respectively in 2016.
5. The EMSD has been working closely with the trade and various organisations in monitoring the manpower situation and implementing measures in recent years to attract and train up new talents. Major measures include:
  - The Vocational Training Council (VTC) and the Construction Industry Council (CIC) jointly introduced the Earn & Learn Scheme in 2014. The number of new apprentices joining the lift and escalator industry has significantly increased from about 70 a year to over 250 a year in 2016 and 2017;
  - In 2016, the VTC and the University of Hong Kong School of Professional and Continuing Education launched two lift and escalator courses for practicing workers for them to acquire the academic qualification for registration as registered workers; and
  - The CIC has implemented the Contractor Cooperative Training Scheme for the Electrical and Mechanical (E&M) trades (including lift mechanic and escalator mechanic) to provide financial support to those who wish to join the lift and escalator industry.

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