

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(W)087

(Question Serial No. 0569)

Head: (42) Electrical and Mechanical Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses
Programme: (2) Mechanical Installations Safety
Controlling Officer: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (Alfred W H SIT)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Under Programme (2), the estimated expenditure in 2018-19 is \$151.6 million, 10.3% higher than the revised estimate for the current year. Regarding the escalator incident that happened last year, are there any plans and improvement measures in the aspects of regulatory control and training? If yes, what are the details and the estimated expenditure and manpower resources involved? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chun-ying (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 3)

Reply:

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) is committed to strictly enforcing the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Cap. 618) (the Ordinance) to ensure that the public is served with safe lift and escalator services. Regulation of escalator safety covers type approval on the design, and subsequent audit inspections of the installation, examination and maintenance works of escalators. All escalators are periodically maintained by registered contractors at intervals not exceeding one month, and examined by registered engineers at intervals not exceeding six months for application of renewal of the use permits by the EMSD. The EMSD has also adopted a risk-based approach to conduct audit inspections of lifts and escalators to identify any non-compliance with the requirements. This approach takes into account a host of factors including the equipment age and type of installation, complaints received, incidents happened, change-over of maintenance contractors, and performance of contractors involved. Prosecution/disciplinary actions will be instituted against the concerned registered persons if non-compliance with the Ordinance is found during the EMSD's audit inspections.

After the escalator incident at Langham Place, the EMSD has completed a round of special audit inspections in 2017 for each of the 64 high-rise escalators with a vertical rise of 15 metres or above. No abnormality was found and all escalators were confirmed to be in safe working conditions. The incident was attributed to failure of the concerned practitioners to properly discharge their duties, resulting in simultaneous failure of both the main drive chain and the broken chain safety device installed for monitoring breakage and

excessive elongation of the main drive chain. Although such simultaneous failure of the aforesaid devices is very rare, the EMSD issued circulars to remind all registered contractors to properly inspect and maintain key protective devices and drive systems of escalators in accordance with the relevant Code of Practice, and to ensure the workers are fully aware of the technical requirements to diligently carry out escalator maintenance works. The EMSD also issued a letter to provide specific guidelines to the Responsible Persons and registered contractors of high-rise escalators on maintenance of these escalators.

The EMSD has established a staff posting and training mechanism to ensure all members of its lift and escalator safety team have sufficient work experience and training to carry out lift and escalator audit inspections in a competent manner. In 2018-19, the lift and escalator safety team will comprise 43 staff members with an estimated total expenditure of \$45.1 million.

The EMSD will continue to strictly enforce the Ordinance and step up public education and publicity to enhance lift and escalator safety.

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