

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(W)088

(Question Serial No. 1838)

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:

There was a major escalator incident in 2017. The Government has therefore increased the planned number of inspections. In deploying the resources, will the Government first select those lifts and escalators with higher risk? If yes, what are the criteria for selection?

At present, how many lifts and escalators in Hong Kong are under the regulatory control of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department? How many qualified persons can carry out examination and maintenance for lifts and escalators?

What measures does the Government have to attract people to join the industry related to examination and maintenance of lifts and escalators? What is the expenditure for such measures?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Han Pan (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 42)

Reply:

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has adopted a risk-based approach to conduct audit inspections of lifts and escalators taking into account aspects such as the equipment age and type of installation, complaints received, incidents happened, change-over of maintenance contractors, and performance of contractors involved. After the escalator incident at Langham Place, the EMSD has completed a round of special 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. Another round of such inspections would be conducted in 2018.

At the end of 2017, there were 66 291 lifts and 9 379 escalators in Hong Kong that are under the regulatory control of the EMSD. There were 342 registered lift/escalator engineers and 5 616 registered lift/escalator workers who are qualified to carry out maintenance, examination, installation and demolition of lifts and escalators. In addition, there were about 1 800 general workers who work under the supervision of registered engineers or registered workers.

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 practising 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 trades (including lift mechanic and escalator mechanic) to provide financial support to those who wish to join the lift and escalator industry.

The whole range of the EMSD's work on lift and escalator safety is carried out collectively by a team, and the EMSD does not have a breakdown of the manpower for individual work such as implementing measures to attract new entrants to join the industry. The estimated total expenditure for lift and escalator safety in 2018-19 is \$45.1 million.

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