

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 4319)

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:

Please advise on the specific measures taken by the Development Bureau (Works Branch) to strengthen the regulation of lift and escalator safety in the past five years and 2020-2021, with the corresponding expenditure and number of personnel involved; and whether the Government has punished the contractors involved in accidents and inferior maintenance in accordance with existing mechanism and legislation. Please list the details of the contractors involved and the penalties imposed by the Government.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 285)

Reply:

Regulatory control of lift and escalator safety (Note 1) is one of the functions of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD), which covers vetting and approving applications for use permits, audit inspections of installation, examination and maintenance works of lifts and escalators, incident investigations, prosecutions/disciplinary actions, etc.

In the past five years, the EMSD implemented the following major measures in the regulation of lift and escalator safety:

- (i) Increased the number of inspections from about 11 800 in 2015 to about 29 100 in 2019;
- (ii) Issued 55 circulars to the trade to provide technical guidance and strengthen relevant regulatory control, including requiring registered contractors and registered engineers to upload their examination results of important components to the EMSD's electronic platform for spot checks, compiling guidelines on examination and maintenance works for registered engineers and registered workers, and providing guidance on proper maintenance of brakes and safety devices of lifts;
- (iii) Raised the qualification requirements for registration as engineers and workers in May 2017;

Note 1: The relevant regulatory control is based on the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Cap. 618).

- (iv) Revised the Code of Practice for Lift Works and Escalator Works in August 2018 to enhance maintenance requirements for important safety components of aged lifts and improve the format of log-book; and
- (v) Revised the Code of Practice on the Design and Construction of Lifts and Escalators in August 2019 to strengthen the design requirements for lifts and escalators.

In 2020-21, the EMSD will continue to strictly enforce the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (the Ordinance), step up inspection of maintenance works carried out by registered contractors for aged lifts and escalators, and study the feasibility of mandating lift modernisation works.

If a registered lift/escalator contractor, registered engineer, registered worker, or the responsible person for a lift/escalator is found to have contravened the Ordinance or the relevant codes of practice, the EMSD will take prosecution, disciplinary action or other appropriate follow-up action against the person concerned. The numbers of prosecutions and disciplinary actions initiated by the EMSD against registered contractors in respect of lifts and escalators in the past five financial years are tabulated below:

Financial Year	Prosecution Initiated (Number of Cases)	Disciplinary Action Taken (Number of Cases)
2019-20*	2	0
2018-19	4	1
2017-18	4	2
2016-17	0	1
2015-16	0	1

* As at end February 2020

Among the completed prosecution cases, the penalties included fines ranging from \$3,000 to \$320,000, involving ten contractors. Among the completed disciplinary cases, the penalties included fines ranging from \$60,000 to \$220,000, involving five contractors.

The above-mentioned regulatory work is undertaken by a dedicated team of the EMSD. The manpower and expenditure involved in 2020-21 and the past five financial years are tabulated below:

Financial Year	Number of Personnel	Expenditure (\$ million)
2020-21	58	64.30 (Estimate)
2019-20	57	61.11 (Estimated year-end expenditure)
2018-19	46	51.21
2017-18	34	37.72
2016-17	27	32.61
2015-16	36	35.90

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