Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

DEVB(W)113

Question Serial No.

2803

Head: 42 Electrical and Mechanical

Subhead (No. & title):

Services Department

<u>Programme</u>: (2) Mechanical Installations Safety

<u>Controlling Officer</u>: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services

<u>Director of Bureau</u>: Secretary for Development

Question:

The Administration indicates that it will continue to implement the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance, and under the said programme, has listed out the number of inspections and the inspection rates for lifts and escalators, as well as the number of incidents investigated. In this regard, would the Administration please provide the following information:-

- (a) The estimated inspection percentage for lifts and escalators this year (i.e. 2013) is lower than that in 2011 and 2012. What are the considerations in setting the relevant inspection percentages? Will the Administration consider to increase the inspection percentage?
- (b) How many staff are responsible for carrying out the inspection works? Any resources reserved to increase the manpower this year?
- (c) What is the average time required by the Department to carry out each lift and escalator inspection? What are the areas covered by the inspection? Will re-inspection be targeted at contractors with lower performance?
- (d) The Department has investigated 272 lift and escalator incidents last year. What are the main problems involved in these incidents? What are the numbers of injuries and fatalities resulted from the above incidents?
- (e) Since the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance was enacted in April 2012, how many contractors have to face disciplinary proceedings action due to their unsatisfactory performance?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Hak-kan

Reply:

- (a) The numbers of inspections for lifts and escalators in 2011 and 2012 were 9 107 and 9 173 respectively, equivalent to 15.6% and 15.3% respectively of the total numbers of lifts and escalators under statutory control of the legislation in force at the time. The newly enacted Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (the Ordinance), with main provisions put into operation on 17 December 2012, is applicable to all lifts and escalators in Hong Kong, including those of the Government and the Housing Authority, thereby increasing lifts and escalators subject to the statutory control from 52 000 to 60 000 lifts and 7 400 to 8 200 escalators. Whilst the inspection percentage was set based on a risk-based approach, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has increased the number of lifts and escalators inspections from 9 173 in 2012 to 9 400 in 2013.
- (b) The team in EMSD responsible for carrying out on-site audit inspections of lifts and escalators comprises one Senior Engineer, three Engineers and 19 inspectors. EMSD has deployed one Senior Engineer and one Engineer to cope with the additional workload arising from the preparation for implementation of the Ordinance. EMSD will review the manpower situation from time to time to ensure that sufficient resources are available to carry out inspection of lifts and escalators.
- (c) On average, the number of lifts and escalators inspected by an inspector ranges from two to four per day, depending on the complexity of the installation. The areas covered by the inspection include performance of lift safety components such as governor, safety gears, brakes, door locks; and the condition of other components such as suspension ropes, lighting, emergency alarm, ventilation fan. By adopting a risk-based approach, additional audit inspections will be carried out by EMSD on lifts and escalators maintained/ serviced by contractors with lower performance according to a risk-based approach to ensure safety.
- (d) About 90% of the incidents investigated was related to personal behaviour such as passenger's hand being too close to the lift doors while the remaining incidents were due to the failure of equipment, mainly involving defective suspension ropes and electrical and mechanical components. Amongst the incidents investigated in 2012, there were 17 injury cases and one fatality case.
- (e) The Ordinance was enacted in April 2012 with the main provisions put into operation on 17 December 2012. No disciplinary proceeding has been initiated to date. There were however two disciplinary cases completed in 2011 and one disciplinary case initiated in 2012 under the repealed Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance (Cap. 327).

CHAN Fan
Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services
2.4.2013