Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

DEVB(W)206

Question Serial No.

4047

Head: 42 Electrical and Mechanical

Subhead (No. & title):

Services Department

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

Controlling Officer: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services

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

Question:

The number of technical staff in the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) responsible for carrying out inspections to more than 60 000 lifts and 8 000 escalators in Hong Kong is around 20. Based on the existing manpower, around 10 000 lifts are inspected each year, which means each lift can only be re-inspected by EMSD staff at least six years on average. Due to the ageing problem of buildings in Hong Kong as well as their associated facilities, the Administration should strictly monitor the safety of lifts as they are directly related to public safety. Please advise:

- 1. EMSD is currently adopting the "one out of seven" inspection policy, and only around 10 000 lifts can be inspected each year. However, in view of the frequent occurrence of major lift incidents in recent years, will the Department change the "one out of seven" inspection policy, so as to step up the inspection on lifts and protect public safety? If yes, what is the target? If no, what are the reasons?
- 2. Will the Administration provide increased resources and employ more technical staff to carry out more inspections on lifts, so as to protect public safety? If yes, what is the quantity? If no, what are the reasons?
- 3. EMSD introduced the contractors' performance rating system in 2009, but there is no distinguished difference between pass or fail. Some contractors with consistently lower rating can still continue to do their business, leading to problems in their maintenance work quality, and hence unable to protect public safety. Will the Department review the system and increase penalties, so as to ensure the maintenance work quality of the contractors for protecting public safety? If yes, what are the changes? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

- 1. EMSD has adopted a risk-based approach to arrange audit inspections of lifts and escalators taking into account the age, type of installation, complaint, incident, change-over of maintenance contractors, and performance of contractors involved. EMSD will carry out a critical review taking into account lessons learnt from the recent lift incident in North Point. EMSD will review the risk elements for sampling of lifts and escalators for audit inspection such that more inspections would be conducted for those installations maintained by contractors with low contractors' performance rating (CPR) and those having received warning letters, orders, complaints or involved in incidents. EMSD aims at strengthening enforcement against poor performers with a view to enhancing public safety.
- 2. To enhance the regulation of escalator and lift safety, approval was granted in 2010 for EMSD to expand its establishment by creating one engineer and seven inspector posts. EMSD will deploy available resources to suit the above changes in its inspection approach.
- 3. The CPR is an administrative measure employed by EMSD to supplement the legislation enforcement works. Warning letters will be issued to contractors with non-conforming performance. EMSD will initiate prosecution and/or disciplinary actions against contractors concerned if sufficient evidences are found in contravention of any provisions of the Ordinance. Furthermore, in the capacity of the Registrar under the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance, the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services may suspend the registration of a registered contractor if he is satisfied that the contractor contravenes any provision of the Ordinance.

Name in block letters:	CHAN Fan
_	Director of Electrical and
Post Title:	Mechanical Services
Date:	9.4.2013