

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

**S-DEVB(W)09**

Question Serial No.

S061

Head: 42 Electrical and Mechanical Services Department      Subhead (No. & title):

Programme:                      (2) Mechanical Installations Safety

Controlling Officer:      Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services

Director of Bureau:      Secretary for Development

Question:      Follow up question on Question serial number 0313:

The average daily wages of lift and escalator workers were decreasing in the past three years. It would be difficult to attract newcomers to the trade with relatively low wages. Please advise what measures the Administration will take to improve the salary of lift and escalator workers, and attract more newcomers to the trade.

Asked by: Hon. TANG Ka-piu

Reply:

The new Lift and Escalator Ordinance introduces a registration regime for workers to replace the employer-tied arrangement. The new arrangement provides workers with more flexibility in choosing jobs and bargaining power in negotiating remuneration packages.

Stepping up regulation against registered contractors to protect public safety aside, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has enhanced various publicity and promotions to urge responsible persons for lifts and escalators to be mindful of factors other than price in selecting contractors to ensure safety. The EMSD will publish categorisation of the performances of registered contractors regularly to help property owners and property management companies make informed choices in selecting appropriate registered contractors. We wish that the measures could improve the operating environment of registered contractors thus allowing them to be better placed to make investments in manpower and offer better remuneration packages to workers.

Besides, the following measures to improve the employment conditions and attract more newcomers to the trade will be implemented:

(i) Strengthening training

Currently, the Construction Industry Council is deliberating with the Hong Kong Federation of Electrical and Mechanical Contractors, the Lift and Escalator Contractors Association

(LECA) and the Vocational Training Council (VTC) on ways to provide more training for the electrical and mechanical trade, including the lift and escalator trade, of the construction industry. To increase the manpower for the trade, they have agreed in principle to introduce the Contractor Cooperative Training Scheme for the electrical and mechanical trade and provide subsidy to those trainees who intend to join as electrical and mechanical apprentices after completing VTC's basic craft courses in electrical and mechanical engineering.

(ii) Improving working conditions

A safe working environment can help to attract youngsters to join the lift and escalator trade. In this regard, the EMSD regularly organises activities for promoting safety in lift and escalator works to raise the practitioners' awareness on work safety. EMSD also reviews and updates its code of practice (CoP) with a view to enhancing the requirements on working conditions. For instance, the CoP has introduced new provision that required contractors to assess and confirm that the environmental factors, such as temperature, ventilation, lightings, etc., inside the lift shaft are suitable before commencing works.

(iii) Attracting new comers to become lift and escalator apprentices

EMSD together with other 18 electrical and mechanical trade organisations (including LECA) and VTC held a career exhibition on electrical and mechanical trade in early March 2013 to arouse new comers' interest to join the trade. The event was attended by about 3 000 young students and their family members. At the same time, EMSD has increased the monthly salary of their apprentices (including lift and escalator trade) to \$8,000 starting from year 2013 to attract more new comers to join the trade.

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Date:	<u>17.4.2013</u>