

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

**THB(T)197**

Question Serial No.

4730

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

Programme: (2) Mechanical Installations Safety

Controlling Officer: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Regarding the railway incidents investigation, why is the estimated figure in 2013-14 the same as the actual figure in 2012-13? Please explain how this estimated figure is worked out? Besides, apart from conducting incident investigations, will a larger scale inspection on railway systems and facilities be carried out to ensure safety of the massive number of passengers? If so, what is the estimated expenditure?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth

Reply:

The Railways Branch (RB) of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) carries out investigation on major railway incidents which have impact on railway safety. The estimated number of incidents to be investigated in 2013 was based on the actual figure of the previous years. Since the actual figures of 2010, 2011 and 2012 are on a decreasing trend of 95, 93 and 90 respectively, the estimated figure for 2013 is set to be the same as that for 2012.

(For Internal Reference Only : For each railway incident, MTRCL has the primary responsibilities to identify the causes and take prompt remedial measures to rectify the problems and prevent recurrence of similar incidents. RB will carry out investigation on major railway incidents which have impact on railway safety. The main purpose of the investigation is to determine the root causes of the accident with a view to avoiding similar accidents in the future. RB would follow up with MTRCL to ascertain the remedial and improvement measures have been satisfactorily completed.)

In addition to railway incident investigation, the RB of the EMSD also conducts regular inspections and audits to monitor railway safety critical systems and facilities, and participates in drills and exercises to ensure safe operation of railway systems. These inspections, audits and drills are carried out by the existing staff of the RB as part of their normal duties and no additional expenses are incurred.

(For Internal Reference Only : The inspection of RB/EMSD will include three areas:

(1) Regular Inspection

- (a) Conduct inspection according to the design, operation and maintenance practice of respective systems to ensure that MTRCL has followed the laid-down procedure for effective risk management to ensure passenger safety.
- (b) Adopts a risk-based approach to strengthen monitoring of maintenance tasks of safety-critical items (SCI) associated with higher safety risks to ensure safe operation of the railway

During the inspection, RB will validate if (i) MTRCL has safety Independent Checker to verify the work of these SCI items and (ii) the maintenance works have been done in compliance with the established work instruction, interval and procedure.

Besides, RB also closely monitors railway operation and adjusts the number of inspections based on the level of system risk. For example, if the number of incidents involving a particular system exceeds the expected value, EMSD will strengthen the inspection on that system to ensure railway safety.

(2) Incident Inspection

RB carries out incident inspections to investigate the major and/or high profile railway incidents that may have implications on railway safety, including those which under slightly different circumstances may have led to an accident. The inspection focus will be on safety improvement with a view to avoiding similar accidents or occurrences in future.

(3) Drills and Exercise

RB participates in drills (e.g. arson on train/station) and exercises (e.g. simulate OCC failure and switch to station control model) conducted by the MTRCL, Hong Kong Police Force and Fire Services Department at railway premises to enhance the liaison and communication among all parties in handling major railway incident. RB will give observations to the MTRCL and other government departments with a view to enhancing their emergency preparedness on railway incidents.)

Name in block letters:

CHAN FAN

Post Title:

Director of Electrical and  
Mechanical Services

Date:

5.4.2013