

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**DEVB(W)102**

**(Question Serial No. 1491)**

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 (POON Kwok-ying)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

As set out under Indicators, the number of inspections of lifts and escalators in 2026 drops significantly by 4 000 to 26 000 when compared with that in 2025, while its percentage with respect to the number of existing lifts and escalators also falls from 34% to 30.1%. The remark explains that the decrease in the total number of inspections is primarily attributed to “the reduction in the number of lifts without any of the essential safety devices”. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of:

- a) the specific aspects or software and hardware components to be checked in each inspection, and how the related issues are followed up;
- b) the reasons for the sharp decrease in the figure in 2026 and the significant decrease in the number of “lifts without any of the essential safety devices” in 2026;
- c) whether the drop in overall inspection coverage rate from 34.6% to 30.1% will lead to safety hazards, such as overlooking potential faults or increasing accident risks; if so, whether remedial or preventive measures are available; if not, the reason;
- d) whether the Government will introduce or scale up the use of the latest technologies such as artificial intelligence to complement manual inspections, so as to maintain high safety standards despite the reduction in the number of inspections; if so, the details; if not, the reason?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ming-sum, Michelle (LegCo internal reference no.: 34)

Reply:

Our reply to the Member's questions is as follows:

- a) The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has been adopting a risk-based strategy to conduct regular and surprise inspections of lifts and escalators. Under this mechanism, a range of factors including the service age of equipment, type of device, degree of aging, complaint and incident record, change of maintenance contractor and its past performance will be taken into account in a holistic manner. The inspections cover checking of the lift and escalator operation and, when necessary, the registered workers of the maintenance contractors will be required to

conduct on-site functional tests on individual components (including traction machines, brakes, door locks, ropes, etc.) to verify their performance and ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant codes of practice for the lift and escalator maintenance works. If the EMSD identifies any non-compliance with the requirements of the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Cap. 618) during inspections, prosecutions or disciplinary actions against the relevant maintenance contractors and/or their registered workers will be initiated.

- b) & c) To strengthen regulation of lift maintenance, in particular for aged lifts lacking any of 4 major safety devices (including double braking system, unintended car movement protection device, ascending car overspeed protection device, advanced car door locking device and door safety edge), the EMSD has kept optimising its inspection strategy for such aged lifts since 2018 and allocated additional resources to increase the inspection frequency. As a result, the overall number of lift and escalator inspections per year increased gradually from 14 000 in 2018 to 30 000 in 2023, and remained at that level until 2025.

Following the launch of the Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme by the Government in 2018, public awareness of modernising aged lifts has been rising, leading to substantial progress in the modernisation works for aged lifts over the past few years. The number of aged lifts lacking any of the 4 major safety devices decreased from about 53 000 in 2018 to about 39 000 in 2025, representing a cumulative reduction of approximately 25%.

With the gradual decline in the number of such aged lifts, the overall number of inspections required for lifts in Hong Kong has been adjusted downward in line with the risk-based strategy. The resources thus saved will be used to step up regulatory efforts in lift maintenance. For example, since December 2025, the EMSD has required responsible persons (RPs) for lifts to conduct risk assessments for such aged lifts in phases with a systematic approach to identify potential safety hazards, and formulate targeted improvement measures based on the findings and recommendations of the risk assessments. This not only enhances the RPs' awareness of lift safety management but also further reduces safety risks of lifts.

- d) The EMSD has been actively applying innovative technologies to further enhance regulatory effectiveness and safety level of lifts and escalators. Key measures include:
- (i) Digital Log-books (DLBs) for Lifts and Escalators: The EMSD has developed in-house the DLBs system using blockchain technology to replace traditional paperbound records, allowing owners of lifts and escalators, property management companies, registered lift contractors, practitioners and the EMSD to instantly record, retrieve, manage and analyse lift and escalator data through mobile apps or online platforms. This enables joint monitoring of the maintenance work, thereby improving the safety and service efficiency of lifts and escalators holistically. As at the end of 2025, the DLBs system has been adopted for over 70 000 lifts and escalators, accounting for approximately 80% of the total in Hong Kong. The EMSD also continues to enhance the functions of the DLBs system, including launching the Lift and Escalator Condition

Analysis System (LECAS). Utilising deep machine learning technology, the LECAS analyses photos of lift and escalator components collected by the DLBs system, and then sends the analysis results to practitioners via the DLBs system for follow-up actions as appropriate.

- (ii) Artificial Intelligence Risk-Based Inspection Scheduling System: Since 2025, the EMSD has been using big data analytics of lifts, comprehensively taking into account factors such as usage pattern, maintenance record, inspection result and geographical location, to identify lifts with higher potential risks for prioritised inspections, with an aim to enhance inspection efficiency in a more focused manner, thereby further strengthening regulatory effectiveness.

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