

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

DEVB(PL)067

Question Serial No.

2700

Head : 82 Buildings Department Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer : Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Development

Question :

According to the targets set under the 2009 Programme, the pledge for providing 24-hour emergency services is 100%. However, for individual services such as responding to emergencies outside office hours, the target for responding within two hours for cases in urban areas and the New Territories could not be met in 2008. As to the target for responding within three hours for cases in other areas in the New Territories, the pledge was not fulfilled in two consecutive years, i.e. 2007 and 2008. With an additional 6.6% provision in 2009, what arrangements and measures will be taken by the Government to meet the targets? Please list out the itemised breakdown of the manpower resources and expenditure involved.

Asked by : Hon. LAU Sau-shing, Patrick

Reply :

In 2008, the Buildings Department (BD) handled 1 222 emergency cases, out of which 633 cases fell under the category of the two-hour response time pledge (outside office hours for urban areas and new towns in the New Territories). The 95.7% performance was a result of the two-hour pledge being exceeded in 27 cases. The longer time required in these cases was due to the large number of emergency calls received within a short span of time under the inclement weather condition during periods of tropical cyclones and severe rainstorms in the second and third quarters of 2008.

Out of the 1 222 emergency cases handled in 2008, 14 cases fell under the category of the three-hour response time pledge, i.e. cases outside office hours for other areas in the New Territories which are the more remote areas of the territory. Amongst these 14 cases, the three-hour pledge was exceeded in two cases. As a result, the performance in this category was 85.7%. One of the cases occurred when an extraordinarily large number of emergency cases was received within a short period of time during which the red and black rainstorm warning signals were hoisted. The other case took place in Cheung Chau where the ferry service was suspended during the hoisting of typhoon signal No. 8.

In handling emergency cases occurred during office hours, the BD's staff will carry out emergency inspections as part of their normal duties. Designated officers are put on a duty roster to perform emergency duties outside office hours on a rotational basis. As handling of emergency services is part and parcel of the duties of BD staff, we cannot provide a breakdown of the resources and expenditure incurred in this area.

Adequate manpower has been deployed in the BD to handle emergency cases. The aforementioned cases exceeding the time pledges in 2008 were due to extraordinary inclement weather coupled with the large number of emergency calls received within a short span of time. The BD has established procedures in handling emergency cases as stipulated in its "Emergency Handbook" which all duty officers are required to follow. The Department will continue to monitor the provision of emergency services and strive to meet the targets in 2009.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	<u> AU Choi-kai </u>
Post Title	<u> Director of Buildings </u>
Date	<u> 18 March 2009 </u>