

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

**DEVB(PL)093**

Question Serial No.

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

2960

Programme : Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer : Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Development

Question :

Under the targets of 24-hour emergency services, the actual performance in “responding to emergencies outside office hours within three hours for cases in other areas in the New Territories” was only 85.7% in 2008. The performance further declined to 66.7% in 2009. Will the Government inform this Committee:

- (a) why there was a substantial decline in the actual performance?
- (b) whether the Buildings Department, having regard to special reasons such as the remoteness of other areas in the New Territories, has provided appropriate support and manpower to ensure that the target will be achieved in 2010?

Asked by : Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply :

- (a) The target of responding to emergencies outside office hours within three hours applies to cases occurring in the remote areas in the New Territories. In 2008, the Buildings Department (BD) handled 1 222 emergency cases, out of which 14 cases fell under the category of the pledged response time of three hours. Amongst these 14 cases, two could not meet the three-hour pledge. 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 happened in Cheung Chau when the ferry service was suspended during the hoisting of typhoon signal No. 8. In 2009, the BD handled 971 emergency cases, out of which six cases fell under the category of the three-hour pledge. Amongst these six cases, two could not meet the target. As a result, the performance in this category was 66.7%. One of the cases occurred in a remote village in Tai O, Lantau Island and the traffic condition was poor at the time. The other case happened in Lamma Island when the ferry service was suspended during the hoisting of typhoon signal No. 8.

- (b) Adequate manpower has been deployed in the BD to deal with emergency cases. The BD has established procedures, including guidelines on transportation arrangement for handling emergency cases as stipulated in its “Emergency Handbook” which all duty officers are required to follow. In order to attend to emergencies as quickly as possible, the BD’s officers will take the most efficient and speedy mode of transportation that suits the circumstances. In some cases with access and remoteness problems, the BD’s officers may also solicit the assistance of the Police for transportation arrangement. All of the four cases failing to meet the three-hour pledge in 2008 and 2009 were due to extraordinary inclement weather, remoteness of the sites concerned and/or the suspension of ferry service. The Department will continue to keep its procedures under periodic review and provide training to its staff for handling emergency cases.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters     AU Choi-kai    

Post Title     Director of Buildings    

Date     19 March 2010