

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2010-11

Reply Serial No.

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

DEVB(PL)101

Question Serial No.

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

1163

Programme : Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer : Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Development

Question :

- (a) About two weeks before the collapse of the building at 45J Ma Tau Wai Road on 29 January 2010, the Buildings Department (BD) did inspect the building and indicate that there were no imminent dangers. In this connection, has the BD increased provision accordingly for this financial year (i.e. 2010-11) to strengthen the inspection and examination work of old buildings?
- (b) Can the BD provide details of the actions taken on the collapsed building at 45J Ma Tau Wai Road over the past three years (i.e. 2007-08 to 2009-10), including the number of building inspections carried out, structural inspections on the interior of the flats carried out, removal orders on unauthorised building works and repair orders issued, and prosecutions instigated?

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla

Reply :

- (a) Prior to the collapse of the building at 45J Ma Tau Wai Road on 29 January 2010, staff of the Buildings Department (BD) inspected the exteriors and common areas of the building in November 2009 in response to a report from a member of the public on spalled concrete on the exterior of the building. An inspection was also carried out in December 2009 to verify if the building owner had carried out the necessary repair works, before the issuance of a statutory repair order in January 2010.

To sustain our effort to maintain building safety in Hong Kong, as outlined in the Controlling Officer's Report, the BD will continue to undertake various programmes to inspect buildings for building defects and unauthorised building works (UBWs), attend to reports from members of the public on dilapidated buildings and UBWs, issue statutory orders for repair of dilapidated buildings and removal of UBWs, clear dangerous and abandoned signboards, instigate prosecution actions against non-compliance of statutory orders, etc. Subsequent to the building collapse at Ma Tau Wai Road, the BD has deployed 40 teams of professional officers to implement a special inspection operation for about 4 000 buildings aged 50 or above in the territory to ascertain the structural safety of these buildings. The operation has been completed and the BD will follow up with the cases that require repair works. The BD will continue to be provided with adequate resources to implement its programmes.

- (b) According to our record, the BD carried out a total of eight inspections to 45J Ma Tau Wai Road between March 2007 and January 2010, including inspection to the interior of certain flats. During the same period, the BD issued two orders for removal of UBWs and one order for repair of building defects to the owner of the building. Prosecution for failure to comply with one of the orders for removal of UBWs was instigated and the owner was convicted in July 2009.

Signature _____

Name in block letters AU Choi-kai

Post Title Director of Buildings

Date 19 March 2010