

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2011-12

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

Reply Serial No.

DEVB(PL)118

Question Serial No.

0437

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

Programme : Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer : Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Development

Question :

Under "Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2011-12", the Buildings Department will assist the Development Bureau to amend the Buildings Ordinance for the introduction of a signboard control system to deal with around 190 000 existing unauthorised signboards. Please list, by District Council district, the number of signboards and the number of signboards to be removed or repaired.

Asked by : Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply :

The Buildings Department (BD) does not have information on the geographic distribution of existing unauthorised signboards in the territory. However, it is estimated that currently there are about 190 000 unauthorised signboards in Hong Kong and most of them are in active use by business operations. The BD will engage private sector consultants in 2011 to conduct a stock-taking exercise of all unauthorised building works (including unauthorised signboards) on exteriors of private buildings in Hong Kong. More details on existing unauthorised signboards will be available upon completion of the stock-taking exercise.

In addition, we propose to bring in a statutory control scheme, similar to the one for specified minor building works (small canopies, drying racks and supporting frames for air-conditioners) under the Building (Minor Works) Regulation (Cap. 123 sub. leg. N), under which the continued use of certain existing unauthorised signboards (e.g. within stipulated dimensional requirements, not blocking operation of emergency vehicles, etc.) will be allowed after safety checks by registered building professionals or registered contractors. The safety checking has to be renewed once every five years. Unauthorised signboards not joining the scheme will be subject to the BD's enforcement actions. Regarding new signboards, small ones will be subject to the minor works control system, while larger ones will continue to require the prior approval and consent of the BD before installation. With the new schemes, the BD will

in time establish a comprehensive database of all signboards in Hong Kong and have a firmer grasp of their safety conditions to facilitate control and enforcement action.

Signature _____

Name in block letters AU Choi-kai

Post Title Director of Buildings

Date 16.3.2011