

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

Head: 82 Buildings Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

The Government indicates that a reporting scheme for unauthorised building works (UBWs) in New Territories Exempted Houses that constitute less serious contravention of the law and pose lower potential risks to building safety will be implemented in 2012-13. Please advise this Committee of:

- (a) the time table and details of the implementation of the above scheme;
- (b) the expenditure involved;
- (c) the expected number of reports to be received;
- (d) the criteria for determining whether the UBWs reported pose lower potential risks; and
- (e) whether the UBWs reported will be demolished? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply:

The Buildings Department (BD) will set up a dedicated section for implementing an enhanced enforcement strategy against unauthorised building works (UBWs) in New Territories Exempted Houses (NTEHs) in April 2012. Forty-one professional, technical and clerical staff will be allocated to this dedicated section in 2012-13.

The enhanced enforcement strategy includes a large scale operation (LSO) for removal of existing UBWs in NTEHs that constitute serious contravention of the law and pose higher potential risks to building safety which are the first round targets for priority enforcement action, a Reporting Scheme for existing UBWs in NTEHs that constitute less serious contravention and pose lower potential risks to building safety, and immediate enforcement actions against other UBWs in NTEHs which constitute imminent danger, or are newly erected or found under construction.

The Reporting Scheme is designed to curb the emergence of new UBWs and to safeguard the structural safety of NTEHs. Under the Scheme, owners of existing UBWs in NTEHs may submit to the BD the required information on UBWs which were completed before 28 June 2011 and are not included in the list of first round targets. They will also be required to appoint qualified personnel to conduct inspections and verify the safety of the structures concerned. The reporting period will be open for six months from 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2012.

As the Reporting Scheme is part of the overall responsibility of the dedicated section for a full range of work in relation to the enhanced enforcement strategy, we are not able to provide a breakdown of the total expenditure for the Scheme alone. The Reporting Scheme will be launched in April 2012. Since participation in the Scheme is voluntary, it is not possible at this stage to estimate the number of reports which will be received.

During the period of enforcement against the first round targets, the BD will not take immediate enforcement against the reported UBWs unless they are imminently dangerous. The BD will analyse the information collected from the Reporting Scheme, categorise the UBWs, conduct objective risk assessment for different types of UBWs and then formulate follow-up plans for progressive enforcement.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	_____ AU Choi-kai _____
Post Title	_____ Director of Buildings _____
Date	_____ 27.2.2012 _____