

**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:

Regarding the problem of sub-divided flats mentioned under this Programme, will the Government advise this Committee:

- (a) How many inspections under the large scale operation on sub-divided flats have been conducted last year? How many sub-divided flats were involved? Among them, how many cases of irregularities of building works were found?
- (b) As indicated in the Estimates, the number of target buildings for tackling irregularities of building works associated with sub-divided flats will be increased to 200 in the coming year. How much manpower is involved in the operation?
- (c) While inspecting the sub-divided flats, will consideration be given to keeping a record of these flats at the same time so as to facilitate the setting up of a database on sub-divided flats, or to conducting a major statistical survey to grasp the scale of the problem of sub-divided flats in Hong Kong?
- (d) Regarding legislative work on the control of sub-divided flats, what are the details and timetable? What is the expected time for the submission of the legislation to the Legislative Council?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-kin

Reply:

- (a) A large scale operation (LSO) to inspect 150 target buildings per year for rectification of irregularities of building works associated with sub-divided flats has been launched since 1 April 2011. During the nine months from April to December 2011, a total of 116 target buildings were inspected and 800 flats were found to have sub-divided cubicles. The Buildings Department (BD) was able to gain access to and inspect 562 flats. As at 31 January 2012, 170 removal orders had been issued against the irregularities found. However, as the inspection of the remaining 238 sub-divided flats is still on-going and the BD is still finalising the inspection results of some of the inspected cases, we are not able to provide the requested information on the number of irregularities found.
- (b) The LSO will be enhanced by increasing the number of target buildings to be inspected to 200 per year starting from 1 April 2012. The existing resources for 488 professional and technical staff of the two Existing Buildings Divisions and the Mandatory Building Inspection Division of the BD, together with the additional resources for 12 professional and technical staff to be allocated to the Department in 2012-13, will be deployed to carry out the aforementioned operation. As the LSO is part of the overall duties of the concerned Divisions of the BD to implement its building safety and maintenance enforcement programme, we are not able to provide a breakdown of the manpower solely for handling this operation.
- (c) Similar to the handling of other building-safety related cases, the BD has been keeping record of the results of the inspections carried out under the LSO. The BD currently does not have a plan to conduct a territory-wide survey on sub-divided flats.
- (d) As mentioned in previous occasions, we propose to strengthen the statutory control of building works commonly associated with sub-division of flat units by including such works under the Minor Works Control System so that owners will be required to hire qualified professionals and contractors to carry out such works in a manner compliant with the requirements of the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123). The details of the proposal will be discussed at the meeting of the Panel on Development on 28 February 2012. We will endeavour to introduce the amendment regulations to the Legislative Council as soon as possible, such that the new arrangements can commence in the second half of 2012.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ AU Choi-kai _____

Post Title _____ Director of Buildings _____

Date _____ 27.2.2012 _____