

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

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Question Serial No.

4221

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

Programme: Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

1. The Government has received over ten thousand reporting forms for processing under the Reporting Scheme for unauthorised building works (UBWs) in New Territories exempted houses (NTEHs). As estimated by the Department, how much information and time will be required to process all the applications? Will additional staff be recruited to expedite the progress? If yes, what are the details?
2. As estimated by the Department, how much time will be required to remove the UBWs as First Round Targets in the NTEHs? What is the timetable for handling those existing UBWs that constitute less serious contravention of the law and pose lower potential risks to building safety?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth

Reply:

Since 1 April 2012, the Buildings Department (BD) has set up a dedicated Village Houses Section comprising 41 professional, technical and clerical staff to implement the enhanced enforcement strategy against unauthorised building works (UBWs) in New Territories exempted houses (NTEHs). 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 (known as First Round Targets), a Reporting Scheme for existing UBWs in NTEHs that constitute less serious contravention of the law 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 BD has received under the Reporting Scheme 18 034 reporting forms which involved more than 30 000 UBWs. These reporting forms are being processed by the outsourced consultants commissioned by the BD for verifying the information provided, auditing the information on site, categorising the reported UBWs and entering the records into the BD's information system. The exercise is in progress and will take some time. Upon completion of the processing of the reporting forms, we will start to take priority

enforcement action against those UBWs which have not been reported under the Reporting Scheme in response to public reports received. There is no need to recruit more staff at this stage.

In view of the substantial scale of the enforcement action against the First Round Targets, the LSO will be conducted in phases and in a systematic manner. As a start, after the setting up of the dedicated Village Houses Section on 1 April 2012, one target village had been selected from each of the nine New Territories districts for a pilot village by village survey which involved about 2 400 NTEHs. We have streamlined the modus operandi in the light of experience. It is assessed that the dedicated section will be able to meet the target of surveying the First Round Targets in 8 000 NTEHs in 2013.

Our target is to deal with all UBWs in NTEHs progressively and systematically. It is not possible to advise at this stage on how much time will be required to remove the First Round Targets in NTEHs. Under the Reporting Scheme, owners of NTEHs are required to appoint qualified personnel to inspect the structures concerned and submit safety certification to the BD within six months and thereafter every five years after reporting the UBWs. In addition, the BD will conduct audit check on the safety certifications to ensure compliance with the relevant requirements. The processing and administration of the Reporting Scheme is therefore an on-going process.

Name in block letters: AU Choi-kai
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