

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

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Question Serial No.

3570

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 Buildings Department has estimated that it will create 87 additional posts in 2013-14; on the other hand, the staffing provision of the Department for 2013-14 is \$94.5 million or 9.2% higher than the revised estimate for 2012-13. In these connections, please provide a breakdown of the provision and the new posts created for the following work:

- (a) enforcement against Unauthorised Building Works in New Territories exempted houses;
- (b) large scale operations against sub-divided flats; and
- (c) full implementation of Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme and Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme.

Asked by: Hon. SHEK Lai-him, Abraham

Reply:

The 87 new posts to be created in the Buildings Department (BD) in 2013-14 comprise 21 professional posts (four Senior Building Surveyor / Senior Structural Engineer and 17 Building Surveyor / Structural Engineer posts), nine technical posts (Survey Officer (Building) / Technical Officer (Structural) posts) and 57 clerical grade posts.

Among the 87 new posts, ten posts for professional and technical staff and 57 posts for clerical grade staff will be engaged for strengthening departmental and supporting services, as well as enhancing the BD's building safety and maintenance enforcement programme through strengthening the research and development capacity, enhancing the audit function and reinforcing the support for various divisions in implementing the BD's enforcement programme. The other 20 posts for professional and technical staff will be assigned to strengthen services in the approval of building plans and related applications for private development projects.

(a) Unauthorised building works (UBWs) in New Territories exempted houses (NTEHs) - Since 1 April 2012, the BD has established a dedicated Village Houses Section to implement the enhanced enforcement strategy against unauthorised UBWs in NTEHs. The enhanced enforcement strategy includes a large scale operation 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. In 2013-14, the expenditure for the Village Houses Section is estimated to be about \$33 million, made up of \$25 million in staff cost and associated departmental expenditure and \$8 million in consultancy fees. No additional professional or technical posts will be created for the Village Houses Section in 2013-14.

(b) Enforcement action against irregularities of building works associated with sub-divided flats (SDFs) - As the enforcement action against irregularities of building works associated with SDFs, including the large scale operation on SDFs, is carried out by the 493 professional and technical staff of the two Existing Buildings Divisions and the Mandatory Building Inspection Division of the BD as part of their overall duties to implement the BD's building safety and maintenance enforcement programme, we are not able to provide a breakdown of the manpower and financial provision allocated solely for this initiative. No additional professional or technical posts will be created specifically for carrying out the enforcement action against SDFs in 2013-14.

(c) Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) and Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS) – The implementation of the MBIS and the MWIS is part of the overall duties of the 493 professional and technical staff of the Mandatory Building Inspection Division and the two Existing Buildings Divisions of the BD. The Mandatory Building Inspection Division is also responsible for taking enforcement actions against irregularities of building works associated with sub-divided flats and enforcing the fire safety legislation. We are thus not able to provide a breakdown of the manpower and financial provision allocated specifically for implementing the MBIS and the MWIS. No additional professional or technical posts will be created specifically for implementing the MBIS and the MWIS in 2013-14.

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Post Title: Director of Buildings
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