

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)309

(Question Serial No. 5780)

Head: (82) Buildings Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified
Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works
Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (AU Choi-kai)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question (Member Question No. 341):

1. Since the commencement of the Validation Scheme for Unauthorised Signboards in September last year, how many submissions have been received so far? What is the progress of submission validation by the Buildings Department (BD) and the number of acknowledgement letters issued? Please provide the information in a breakdown by type of unauthorised signboards eligible for validation.
2. What is the average time required by BD to issue acknowledgement letters upon receipt of the submissions? Does it meet the performance indicators or targets pledged by the Department?
3. How many random audit checks have been carried out by BD in connection with validation submissions, what percentage of the submissions was subject to audit check and what are the selection criteria? What are the respective numbers of cases subject to enforcement action and cases with prosecutions and/or disciplinary actions instigated against persons contravening the statutory requirements due to irregularities found during random inspections?
4. Has BD assessed whether the current manpower is adequate to handle the workload arising from the Validation Scheme for Unauthorised Signboards? If not, will additional resources and manpower be deployed to address the situation? What are the details of the proposed additional staffing provision, rank, etc.?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth

Reply:

1. Since the implementation of the Validation Scheme for Unauthorised Signboard (validation scheme) on 2 September 2013, the Buildings Department (BD) has received 14 submissions of certification under the validation scheme. Out of these 14 submissions, four submissions were acknowledged, and the other ten submissions could not be processed as incorrect or incomplete information was found.

A breakdown of the submissions by classes of minor works of the unauthorised signboards involved are as follows:

	Class of minor works of the unauthorised signboards involved		
	Class I	Class II	Class III
Number of validation submissions with acknowledgement letter issued	0	3	1
Number of validation submissions that could not be processed	2	8	0

2. We are not able to provide the average processing time of each submission of certification under the validation scheme as BD does not keep statistics on the time taken in processing each submission. There is currently no performance pledge or performance target in this respect.
3. Since the implementation of the validation scheme on 2 September 2013, BD has so far been conducting audit check for all submissions of certification under the validation scheme to ascertain their compliance with the relevant statutory requirements and safety standard including strengthening works. As no major irregularities were found, no follow-up enforcement action, prosecution or disciplinary action had been carried out by BD.

In the light of the newly introduced validation scheme, BD has taken various publicity measures to disseminate relevant information to the public and industry. It is anticipated that the stakeholders would become more familiar with the requirements of the validation scheme and the number of submissions of certification will increase gradually. BD will review the number of submissions of certification received and about 30% of the submissions will be selected for audit checks in 2014-15.

4. In 2014-15, the 31 professional and technical staff in the Signboard Control Unit of BD will be responsible for the validation scheme as part of their overall duties to implement the Signboard Control System. No additional resources and manpower is required for the time being, and BD will keep under review the effectiveness of the validation scheme.