

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 5045)

Head: (82) Buildings Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works
Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (HUI Siu-wai)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question (Member Question No. 100):

As regards the indicator of fire safety directions (FSDns) issued to composite buildings by the Buildings Department, please advise this Committee of the reasons for the noticeable difference between the numbers of FSDns issued and those discharged in the past two years; and of the measures to be implemented in 2014-15 to help owners of the composite buildings to comply with the FSDns and the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon. WU Chi-wai

Reply:

The main reasons for fewer fire safety directions (FSDns) discharged than FSDns issued in the past two years are as follows:

- (a) a period of one year is specified in the FSDns for the building owners to comply with the FSDns so as to allow them sufficient time to carry out the required fire safety improvement works;
- (b) owners' corporation (OC) may not have been formed in some buildings, and it takes time for owners to form an OC to co-ordinate the fire safety improvement works in the common parts of the buildings;
- (c) some owners/OC may prefer to carry out the fire safety improvement works together with other building maintenance works in one go, and hence they need more time to complete the works; and
- (d) some owners have taken extra time to prepare alternative proposals for the fire safety improvement works required by the FSDns due to practical difficulties encountered in carrying out the required works.

In 2014-15, the Buildings Department (BD) will continue to render assistance to building owners in complying with FSDns. The measures to be implemented include:

- (a) offering technical advice, and attending meetings with the building owners and their appointed consultants;
- (b) administering the Building Safety Loan Scheme to provide financial assistance;
- (c) working with the Home Affairs Department in assisting building owners to form an OC; and
- (d) participating in meetings of the District Fire Safety Committee, fire safety carnivals and seminars at district level to instill the concept of upgrading fire safety in old buildings in the community.

In 2014-15, BD will maintain a dedicated Fire Safety Section of 118 professional, technical and clerical staff responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance and the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance, including rendering assistance to building owners as part of their overall duties to administer these two Ordinances. We are not able to provide a breakdown of the expenditure involved solely for assisting owners of composite buildings to comply with FSDns.