

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)064

(Question Serial No. 0742)

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:

Under the Programme “Buildings and Building Works”, the Government stated as a work indicator that the number of inspected sub-divided flats (SDFs), commonly known as subdivided units, was 2 218, substantially higher than the 2013 figure. As explained by the authorities in the document, the increase is due to the inclusion of inspections arising from individual reports on SDFs in addition to the number of inspections under large scale operations as from 2014 onwards. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee:

- A) of the number of reports on SDFs received by the authorities in 2014, and of the existing channels for reporting SDFs by members of the public;
- B) whether the authorities have stepped up publicity and appealed to the public to come forward to report SDFs; if so, of the publicity measures and expenditure involved;
- C) of the measures to be implemented by the authorities in the coming year for stepping up inspection of SDFs to curb irregularities and non-compliance of the relevant safety legislation of SDFs, and of the estimated expenditure and staff establishment involved;
- D) of the actions to be taken if irregularities are found during inspections?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Kin-por (Member Question No. 22)

Reply:

- A) In 2014, Buildings Department (BD) received 5 948 reports related to sub-divided flats (SDFs). Members of the public can report SDF cases to BD via BD hotline handled by “1823”, the electronic reporting form at BD’s webpage, facsimile, email or by post.
- B) BD has stepped up its public education and publicity campaign to disseminate messages on building safety and to foster a building safety culture in the community. Among other actions, BD has published a number of pamphlets providing guidance to the public on how to ensure building safety in SDFs and reminding the public not to carry out unauthorised building works (UBWs). BD has also been advising members of the public through Announcements of Public Interest as well as publication of newspaper

supplements, pamphlets, booklets and posters against living in SDFs in industrial buildings in view of their safety risk. We have included in our message to members of the public that they may report suspected UBWs associated with SDFs to BD. The total expenditure for BD's public education and publicity activities is about \$18 million in 2014-15. We are not able to provide a breakdown of the expenditure for the publicity work solely related to SDFs since that is merged into the publicity against UBWs generally and the publicity advising the public against living in SDFs in industrial buildings forms part of the publicity campaign against UBWs associated with SDFs.

- C) Apart from responding to reports on SDFs from members of the public and other government departments, BD will continue to take enforcement action against UBWs associated with SDFs in an orderly and systematic manner through large scale operations (LSOs). The LSOs in 2015 will cover 330 target buildings comprising 270 domestic/composite buildings and 60 industrial buildings. In 2015-16, the enforcement action against UBWs associated with SDFs will be carried out by the 396 professional and technical staff of the two Existing Buildings Divisions of BD as part of their overall duties to implement BD's building safety and maintenance enforcement programmes. We are therefore not able to provide a breakdown of the manpower resources involved solely for the initiative.
- D) For UBWs associated with SDFs, orders will be served on the owners concerned requiring removal of the UBWs. For domestic SDFs in industrial buildings, BD will also issue orders requiring the owners or occupiers to discontinue the domestic use of the SDFs. Prosecutions will be instigated against failure to comply with the orders.

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