

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**DEVB(PL)097****(Question Serial No. 3071)**

Head: (82) Buildings Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (CHEUNG Tin-cheung)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Eight years ago, the tragic building collapse incident on Ma Tau Wai Road resulted in the death of four people and two injured. In recent years, there were also incidents of balcony collapse from a tenement building aged over 60 in Hung Hom, Kowloon and concrete falling from a canopy of a tenement building in Sai Wan Ho, Island East. As such, unauthorised building works, maintenance and safety of old buildings have become great concerns. It is regretful that the progress of improvement is slow and numerous problems still exist at the moment. Old buildings become dilapidated because of the lack of maintenance. Even when the Buildings Department has issued repair orders against seriously dilapidated buildings with potential safety hazards, some owners are willing but unable to repair their buildings and there is lack of co-operation among owners. The Government has to carry out the repair works in default of the owners and recover the costs from individual owners afterwards, causing much delay. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee:

1. The Government has allocated \$5 billion for enhancing the qualities of old buildings last year, and the maximum subsidy per unit is \$40,000. However, there are sayings that the scheme only covers 500 buildings aged over 50. Since the public coffers are flooded with cash, will the Government consider expanding the scope of subsidy or raising the amount of subsidy of the scheme in order to alleviate the financial pressure on the general public in maintaining their old buildings? What are the details of the scheme?
2. Further to the above question, please list the number of buildings of three storeys or above that will be over 40 years old in the next five years, with a breakdown by District Council district.
3. Has the Government regularly conducted inspections on buildings over 40 years old, so as to ascertain whether such buildings are structurally safe? If so, what is the frequency of such inspections?

Asked by: Hon HO Kwan-yiu, Junius (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 30)

Reply:

1. To protect public safety, the Government plans to launch Operation Building Bright 2.0 (OBB 2.0) at a cost of \$3 billion to provide technical and financial assistance to eligible building owners to carry out inspection and repair works under the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) requirements.

The proposed OBB 2.0 has the following key features –

- (a) a risk-based approach will be adopted such that the operation would focus on residential and composite buildings aged 50 years or above with relatively low average rateable values, having regard to the fact that these buildings pose relatively higher building safety risks;
- (b) to focus on raising the safety standards of participating buildings, subsidies to be provided to owners under the operation should primarily be used for undertaking inspection and repair works required under MBIS in both the common parts and privately-owned areas of the buildings;
- (c) for cases where the owners fail to comply with MBIS notices, the Buildings Department (BD) would exercise its power under statute to carry out the relevant inspections and repair works in default, and the subsidies could be used by eligible owners to offset the amount which BD would charge for those works; and
- (d) to ensure that public resources will be allocated to those who are most in need, subsidies will primarily be granted only to owner-occupiers in eligible buildings.

For common parts of a building, all eligible applications (except elderly applicants) will be subsidised 80% of the cost subject to a cap of \$40,000 per unit. Elderly eligible applicants aged 60 or above will be subsidised 100% of the cost subject to a cap of \$50,000 per unit. In addition, for private projecting structures under MBIS, all eligible property owners will be subsidised 50% of the cost subject to a cap of \$6,000 per unit. It is estimated that the funding under OBB 2.0 would be able to support the commissioning of the inspection and repair works of 2 500 buildings over five years.

Having regard to the objective of OBB 2.0 (viz. protecting public safety) and to avoid causing undue pressure on the building repair and maintenance market by a huge upsurge in new projects at the same time, the Government considers it appropriate to maintain the current scope and scale of OBB 2.0.

2. The geographical distribution of the estimated number of private buildings of three storeys or above that will be over the age of 40 years in the next five years is as follows –

District	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Central and Western	1 787	1 864	1 935	2 004	2 061
Eastern	720	776	813	846	885
Kowloon City	1 757	1 813	1 885	1 924	1 972
Kwai Tsing	215	239	268	282	307
Kwun Tong	423	456	479	520	572
North	250	251	252	278	288
Islands	28	37	54	69	70
Sai Kung	91	109	147	151	210
Sham Shui Po	1 318	1 365	1 409	1 451	1 490
Sha Tin	109	119	137	151	188
Southern	664	727	827	913	998
Tai Po	120	128	144	230	308
Tsuen Wan	323	336	344	377	399
Tuen Mun	83	109	129	135	164
Wan Chai	1 348	1 387	1 428	1 489	1 532
Wong Tai Sin	309	313	318	321	325
Yau Tsim Mong	2 057	2 110	2 161	2 208	2 270
Yuen Long	242	288	307	322	514
Total	11 844	12 427	13 037	13 671	14 553

3. Under the MBIS, which covers private buildings aged 30 years or above, building owners served with a statutory notice are required to appoint a registered inspector (RI) to carry out inspections and a registered contractor to carry out necessary repairs of their buildings as needed. Since the implementation of the MBIS in 2012, the number of buildings whose owners are served with statutory notices and inspected by the RIs under MBIS in each year are tabulated below –

Year	Number of buildings inspected by RIs under MBIS
2013	29
2014	314
2015	530
2016	503
2017	378
Total	1 754

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