

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 3512)

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

Question:

Regarding the “inspection of sub-divided flats in target buildings and rectification of irregularities of building works associated with sub-divided flats”, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- the number of reports received in the past three years and the number of such reports with irregularities found during inspection;
- the number of sub-divided flats inspected with irregularities of building works found, the most common irregularities found, and the number of sub-divided flats with irregularities that have not yet been rectified in 2019-20; and
- whether increasing manpower to speed up rectification of sub-divided flats and inspect more sub-divided flats has been considered; if so, the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Asked by: Hon LEE Kok-long, Joseph (LegCo internal reference no.: 127)

Reply:

- a) The Buildings Department (BD) received 9 337 reports on sub-divided flats (SDFs) from 2017 to 2019 from members of the public or other government departments, among which BD identified SDFs in 3 602 reports. Among these 3 602 reports, 161 SDFs were found to be associated with building irregularities that had to be followed up by the issue of statutory orders.
- b) Apart from responding to reports, BD also takes enforcement action against building irregularities associated with SDFs through large scale operations (LSOs).

In 2019-20 (as at end December 2019), BD inspected 1 111 SDFs in total in response to reports from members of the public or other government departments and through LSOs. 44 SDFs were so far found to be associated with building irregularities which had to be followed up by the issue of statutory orders while further assessment or detailed investigations were still being conducted for some cases. As at end December 2019, the building irregularities associated with 42 of these SDFs were not yet rectified. BD would continue to follow up these cases.

The commonly found building irregularities associated with SDFs are the formation of unauthorised door openings that contravene the fire-resisting construction requirements of fire escape routes, the erection of partition walls that block fire escape routes, sub-standard drainage works that result in water seepage and excessive installation of partition walls and/or thickening of floor screeding that result in overloading of the floor slabs.

- c) BD has implemented improvement measures to speed up the enforcement actions against building irregularities identified in SDFs, such as upgrading its Building Condition Information System to enhance monitoring of the progress of enforcement action, streamlining its operation procedures, redeployment of resources and re-adjusting its work priorities as appropriate. In addition, BD has been allocated additional resources in the past years to cope with various operation needs, including clearance of outstanding cases in relation to SDFs.

Enforcement action against building irregularities associated with SDFs is carried out by 434 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. Four new professional and technical posts will be created in 2020-21 to assist in the implementation of the above-mentioned programmes. We are not able to provide a breakdown of the manpower involved solely for carrying out enforcement action in relation to SDFs.