

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)099

(Question Serial No. 1917)

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:

It is mentioned in paragraph 6 that the Government launched a one-off special operation to inspect domestic and composite buildings aged 60 or above with a view to ensuring fire and building safety. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. Please list the total number of domestic and composite buildings which fit the definition given by the Government and provide a breakdown by District Council district.
2. The Government has all along conducted inspection of fire safety and maintenance of buildings. What are the differences between this one-off special operation and the ongoing inspection? What are the details?
3. For implementation of the initiative, has the Government set the timetable for inspection and determined the order of priority? What are the details? What are the manpower and expenditure involved in this initiative?
4. Some of the buildings which fit the definition of domestic and composite buildings have not formed owners' corporations. There were enormous problems with the ongoing work in respect of fire safety and building maintenance of buildings. What measures will be taken by the Government to assist the building owners concerned to deal with the enforcement actions in question? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 12)

Reply:

1. In November 2020, the Buildings Department (BD) launched a one-off special operation to inspect the conditions of common means of escape of domestic and composite buildings aged 60 or above and take appropriate enforcement actions under the Buildings Ordinance (BO) to ensure fire and building safety. The geographical distribution of these buildings is set out below –

| District | Number of buildings |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Central & Western | 295 |
| Wan Chai | 366 |
| Eastern | 180 |
| Southern | 192 |
| Kowloon City | 809 |
| Kwun Tong | 2 |
| Wong Tai Sin | 3 |
| Yau Tsim Mong | 490 |
| Sham Shui Po | 352 |
| Tsuen Wan | 9 |
| Kwai Tsing | 4 |
| Tuen Mun | 2 |
| Sha Tin | 1 |
| Tai Po | 8 |
| North | 46 |
| Yuen Long | 54 |
| Sai Kung | 0 |
| Islands | 0 |
| Total | 2 813 |

2. In addition to handling public reports, BD has been taking enforcement actions against building defects, building irregularities associated with subdivided flats, unauthorised building works (UBWs) on rooftops, flat roofs, yards, lanes and UBWs affecting common means of escape, etc. in target buildings through large scale operations. The one-off special operation is a territorial-wide one focusing on the UBWs affecting the common means of escape of the target buildings.

3. The inspection commenced on 23 November 2020 and was generally completed on 31 December 2020 as scheduled. Based on the inspection findings and according to the current enforcement policy against UBWs, BD adopts a risk-based approach in prioritising the enforcement actions and is in the process of issuing removal orders under the BO to the owners concerned in an orderly manner, requiring removal of the UBWs or rectification of the irregularities. This one-off special operation is carried out by the professional and technical staff of the two Existing Buildings Divisions and the Mandatory Building Inspection Division as part of their overall duties through internal redeployment and re-prioritisation of work. BD is unable to provide a breakdown of the manpower and resources involved solely for this operation.
4. Owners have the responsibility to ensure that their premises are free from UBWs and should, in their own interest, take the initiative to arrange for removal of the UBWs in their premises. They should also comply with the removal orders to remove UBWs within the specified period. The Government recognises that some owners may have difficulties in fulfilling their responsibility due to the lack of financial means and technical knowledge, and/or other special circumstances. Therefore, the Government has rolled out various assistance schemes to assist eligible owners. Specifically, BD is responsible for implementing the Building Safety Loan Scheme, which provides low interest loans to individual owners of private buildings (interest-free loans may be granted to eligible owners) for carrying out works related to compliance with the statutory orders. In addition, after issuing the removal orders, BD will arrange its in-house social services teams to provide assistance to those owners and residents in need, including coordinating residents of the buildings to carry out the required removal or rectification works, assisting them to apply for financial assistance schemes as appropriate, etc.

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