

Fire Safety (Buildings) Bill
Administration's Response to the speaking points to be used by
Mr. YEUNG Wai-foon on 25 April (Wednesday)

Regarding the difficulties that the public may encounter as suggested by Mr. YEUNG, please refer to paragraphs 2 and 7 of the Administration's response (1st part) to issues raised by Members at the Bills Committee meeting on 14.3.2001.

Our response to other comments made by Mr. YEUNG on the Bill is as follows:

Comment (1)

Please refer to the Administration's response (2nd part) to issues raised by Members at the Bills Committee meeting on 14.3.2001.

Comment (2)

Please refer to paragraphs 2(c) and (d) of the Administration's response (1st part) to issues raised by Members at the Bills Committee meeting on 14.3.2001.

Comment (3)

The enforcement authorities will not tolerate any 'unauthorized structures' that would adversely affect means of escape or give rise to other fire hazards. For those structures that would not affect the fire safety or building construction, considerations would be given to deferring the clearance on individual merits of the case. In assessing the need for alteration or addition of staircases, the authorities will consider the structural condition of the buildings as well as other physical constraints. Addition of staircases will only apply to non-domestic parts of the buildings and the authorities will make such a requirement only if they consider it absolutely necessary. The enforcement authorities will undertake a pragmatic and flexible approach in handling cases where owners encounter practical difficulties in complying with the fire safety directions issued. As specified in clause 5 of the Bill, the relevant enforcement authority may direct the owners to comply with other measures as it considers appropriate in place of the requirements originally specified in the Bill, having regard to the structural integrity of the buildings and other circumstances.

Comment (4)

Please refer to the Administration's response (2nd part) to issues raised by Members at the Bills Committee meeting on 14.3.2001.

Comment (5)

The enforcement authorities are now giving briefing sessions to the 18 District Fire Safety Committees on the Bill to give them a better understanding so that they can help us publicize the requirements and the implementation plan during their contacts with the public. After the passage of the Bill and before its implementation, we will widely publicise the requirements and the details of the fire safety measures through various channels. These will include Television and Radio Announcements of Public Interest; organization of seminars for Owners' Corporations, mutual aid committees and residents associations through the Home Affairs Department; publication and distribution of promotional leaflets; provision of a telephone hotline; etc.