

HPLB(B) 68/04/01 Pt 7

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29 May 2003

The Secretary General
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Miranda Hon)

Dear Ms Hon,

**Meeting and Lunch Between Legislative Councillors
and Wanchai District Councillors on 3 April 2003**

Thank you for your letter of May 20. I would like to reply on the progress of regulation of signboards as below.

As a matter of fact, the Buildings Department (BD) has been taking enforcement action against dangerous or abandoned advertisement signboards. BD regularly inspects the structural safety of advertisement signboards. Should any dangerous or abandoned signboards be found, BD would issue written orders to the owners concerned for the removal or repair of these signboards to ensure that public safety will not be affected.

Since 1996, BD has been undertaking inspection work of advertisement signboards. To date, over 220,000 signboards have been

checked. Among them, 6,900 have been repaired or removed. BD has further stepped up the inspection work. In 2002, action was taken against some 1,900 dilapidated or abandoned signboards, which is 5.5 times the figure of 350 in 1997. In 2003, BD continues with the inspection scheme with a target of taking action against 1,200 dilapidated or abandoned signboards.

On the other hand, owners' corporations can also take appropriate action concerning illegal signboards. Under Section 16 of the Building Management Ordinance, an owners' corporation can approach the Lands Tribunal to lodge objection or take legal proceedings in respect of advertisement signboards erected in the common parts of the building.

Efforts are being made to further improve the regulation of advertisement signboards. In April 2003, we introduced the Buildings (Amendment) Bill 2003 to the Legislative Council. The Bill proposes, among other things, the introduction of a category of minor works for the purpose of regulating smaller-scale building works which are less complicated and less risky. If the relevant legislative proposals are adopted, most signboards will be classified as minor works. These works, being simpler, do not require the approval of the Building Authority before commencement of works. Nonetheless, signboards are still subject to certain regulation according to their size and structure. As to the construction of large signboards, it is put under the same control regime as ordinary building works. The approval of the Building Authority is required before the commencement of such works.

To tie in with the proposals of the Buildings (Amendment) Bill 2003, we are in the process of formulating technical guidelines on the construction and repair of advertisement signboards for reference by owners, professionals and contractors. We hope that the Bill will be passed expeditiously by the Legislative Council following scrutiny.

Yours faithfully,

(Rick Chan)
for Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands