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Canopy collapse due to lack of maintenance (with photo)

The Buildings Department (BD) today (October 6) announced the findings of an investigation into the collapse of a canopy at the industrial building at 3 Kin Kwan Street, Tuen Mun. The accumulation of water on the canopy combined with serious corrosion of the reinforcement bars inside resulting from a lack of periodic maintenance or repair may have caused its collapse.

The occupation permit for this 13-storey building was issued in 1979. A 1.5m-wide cantilevered slab canopy was built around the building at 1/F level facing Kin Kwan Street and Kin Wing Street. A section of 40m long of canopy facing Kin Kwan Street collapsed on June 9, 2011. The BD has conducted an investigation into the cause of the incident, through site inspection, analysis of samples collected on site, review of building records, and examination of information gathered from witnesses.

The investigation has revealed that the effectiveness of the drainage arrangement for the surface water on the canopy was adversely affected by the covering up of the surface channel at the inner edge of the top of the canopy by the thickened floor screeding. The accumulation and seepage of water on the canopy subsequently caused serious corrosion of the reinforcement bars inside, resulting in the collapse of the canopy.

"The investigation did not reveal any deficiency in the design and construction of the subject canopy. The cause of collapse was mainly due to lack of proper and periodic maintenance," the spokesman said.

Following the incident, the BD launched a special operation to inspect some 3,700 private buildings in the territory with similar cantilevered slab canopies to assess their state of repair and maintenance. The special operation has just been completed. Regarding the canopies inspected, none have shown any signs of imminent danger requiring emergency remedial works whilst about 600 have shown various degrees of deficiency in maintenance resulting in certain defects such as concrete spillings, defective waterproofing and defective drainage system. Some of them involve the presence of unauthorised building works (UBW). The BD will require the owners/Owners' Corporations concerned to appoint an authorised person to investigate the actual conditions of these cantilevered slab canopies and, if necessary, submit

proposals of remedial works for rectifying the defects found to the BD for approval. UBW on or attached to these canopies will also be required to be demolished.

The BD would like to remind all owners/Owners' Corporations that it is their basic responsibility to keep their building safe and, for this purpose, to carry out regular inspections and timely maintenance and repair of their buildings, in particular the cantilevered slab canopies, if any, of their buildings.

"Subsequent to the recent enactment of the Buildings (Amendment) Ordinance 2011, the mandatory building inspection scheme will soon be fully implemented in 2012. The scheme will require buildings of 30 years or above to have inspections and necessary repair carried out every 10 years. Such inspection and repair will include the cantilevered slab canopies, if any, of these buildings." the spokesman added.

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