

## **Legislative Council Panel on Development**

### **The Administration's Responses to the Motion passed under agenda item VII "Regulatory control over lift safety" at the meeting on 29 May 2018**

Regarding the motion moved by Hon HO Kai-ming on regulatory control over lift safety and passed by the Legislative Council Panel on Development at its meeting on 29 May 2018, the Administration's responses are as follows:

**"Launching a special subsidy scheme as soon as possible, so as to assist owners to carry out modernization works for aged lifts (including the replacement of aged lifts, important components and safety devices) to increase the safety factor; and stipulating in the long run that all lifts in the territory should be installed with safety devices meeting the required standards, so as to ensure safety."**

1. Lifts must have proper periodic examinations and maintenance to ensure their safe use. However, as the lifts get aged, the maintenance problems encountered will be more and more in terms of number and complexity. Owing to rapid technological advancement in recent years, modern lifts are equipped with more comprehensive safety devices than the aged ones. There are thus rooms for improving and enhancing aged lifts from the lift safety perspective. In view of this, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) promulgated "the Guidelines for Modernising Existing Lifts" in 2011, which aims at recommending that the Responsible Persons should install safety devices (including the unintended car movement protection device) for their aged lifts to make the lifts safer, more reliable and comfortable.
2. As of the end of 2017, there were about 66 200 lifts in Hong Kong, of which about 80% were not equipped with safety devices of the latest standard. Owing to the fact that the lift modernisation is carried out on a voluntary basis, modernisation works of different level have been carried out to about 5 200 lifts since 2011. The progress is not remarkable.
3. In view of the above, the Development Bureau (DEVB) and the EMSD are actively formulating short-term, medium-term and medium to long-term measures to enhance the safety of aged lifts, thereby further protecting public safety:

- Short-term measures: The EMSD will step up its surveillance checks of the maintenance and examination of lifts, in particular those components that may affect the safe operation of lifts. At the same time, the department is also studying how the Responsible Persons and Registered Contractors can strengthen the maintenance of aged lifts that have not yet been modernised.
- Medium-term measures: The DEVB and the EMSD will consider the feasibility of allocating funding to subsidise those owners in need by making reference to the on-going “Operation Building Bright 2.0 Scheme” and “Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme”, and providing them with appropriate professional support, so as to encourage them to speed up the lift modernisation works.
- Medium to long-term measures: The DEVB and the EMSD will study the feasibility of mandating the lift modernisation works in phases. In this regard, we will make reference to practices of other countries, and take into account the impact on the community and the trade.

4. We will brief Members on the details of the new measures as soon as possible, especially the subsidy scheme related to the medium-term measures.

**“Requiring lift contractors to provide owners' corporations ("OC") and owners with component replacement and maintenance records of lifts, so as to ensure that owners are aware of the existing conditions of the safety components of lifts.”**

5. “The Code of Practice for Lift Works and Escalator Works” (the Code) is issued by the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services under the provisions of the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Chapter 618) (the Ordinance). According to the Code, Registered Lift Contractor, Registered Lift Engineer and Registered Lift Worker should record details of the matters related to lift works done, incident handled, breakdowns, examination and maintenance on the logbook of the lifts on the day the work is completed, including the replacement of critical components of the lift (including suspension ropes). The Responsible Person should also monitor the Registered Lift Contractor to complete the works in accordance with the Code, the contractual requirements of both parties, etc., and countersign the logbook. In addition, the EMSD will study and improve the format of the logbook for recording the Registered Lift Contractors' maintenance works as well as further refine the "Sample Contract for Procurement of Comprehensive Lift/Escalator Maintenance Service" currently uploaded on the department's website, so that the EMSD, the Registered

Contractors' works supervisors and the Responsible Persons can supervise/inspect the work of the Registered Contractors more effectively.

**“Increasing the manpower of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department ("EMSD"), so as to step up inspections and enhance efforts to monitor the lift maintenance and repair work carried out by contractors.”**

6. The EMSD attaches great importance to lift and escalator safety, and has set up a dedicated team responsible for regulating lift and escalator safety throughout the territory. In 2018/19, the EMSD has increased the manpower of the dedicated team to 43 staff members, in order to strengthen the inspections of aged lifts. Regarding the new series of measures that will be implemented in the future, the EMSD will further examine the manpower requirements to cope with the additional workload.

**“Providing guidelines drawn up by EMSD on lift maintenance and repair contracts, so as to assist OC and owners to select suitable lift contractors.”**

7. In order to facilitate the Responsible Persons to invite tenders for the maintenance services or modernisation works for their lifts, the EMSD has prepared the “Sample Contract for Procurement of Comprehensive Lift/Escalator Maintenance Service” and “Sample Specifications for Engagement of Registered Lift Contractor for Carrying out Lift Modernisation Works” for reference by the Responsible Persons during tendering. At the same time, in order to assist the Responsible Persons in engaging Registered Lift Engineers to audit the maintenance work of contractors and provide consultancy services, the EMSD has also prepared the “Sample Specifications for Engagement of Independent Registered Lift Engineer for Lift Maintenance Audit” for reference by the Responsible Persons. The sample of the specifications concerned can be downloaded from the EMSD’s website. We will continue to listen to the views of various stakeholders and provide appropriate technical support for the Responsible Persons.

**“Promoting” designated workers for designated skills” in the lift industry, so as to ensure that there is sufficient manpower for and time spent on carrying out maintenance and repair work on each lift.”**

8. Registered lift contractors will in general assign emergency repair works to appropriate workers based on the manpower and techniques required for and the location of the works. The Ordinance does not require contractors to allocate separate manpower to periodic maintenance and emergency repair works. However, no matter the works are maintenance or emergency repair, registered lift/escalator contractors must ensure sufficient manpower and provide sufficient training and instructions for the workers to ensure that the

lift/escalator works concerned are carried out safely and properly. In this regard, the EMSD issued a circular to Registered Contractors in 2014 that if the workers could not complete their maintenance works in progress due to deployment for other emergency works during periodic maintenance, the Registered Contractor should arrange the workers to indicate "suspension of work" and the reason for leaving at the remark column of the logbook. The workers should be arranged to make up for the unfinished maintenance works as soon as possible, and the contents of the work replenished should be recorded in the remark column of the logbook.

9. Regarding the time required for maintenance, the EMSD discussed with the trade in 2014 about the time for maintenance of lifts/escalators. The trade generally agreed that registered lift/escalator contractors should allow sufficient time for workers to carry out the maintenance works properly. In this regard, the EMSD also issued a circular to Registered Contractors in the same year to remind them that if they were to allocate workers to handle maintenance works for more than six lifts/escalators on the same day, they should carefully consider the work allocation and ensure that the work can be carried out safely and properly.

10. The EMSD will closely monitor the manpower situation of Registered Contractors and timely review with them their manpower arrangement to ensure that they have sufficient manpower to properly handle emergency repair and periodic maintenance works.

**“Strengthening professional training for lift maintenance and repair personnel and improving the work environment concerned to attract new entrants to the industry, so as to improve the quality of maintenance and repair work provided by the industry as a whole.”**

11. The EMSD has been closely monitoring the manpower situation of the market. Apart from maintaining close communication with the industry, the following series of measures have been implemented in recent years to attract more new bloods to join the industry:

- The Vocational Training Council (VTC) and the Construction Industry Council (CIC) jointly introduced the “Earn & Learn” Scheme in 2014. The number of new apprentices enrolled each year has increased remarkably, from about 70 in the past to more than 200 in 2015 and more than 250 in both 2016 and 2017;
- In 2016, the VTC and the HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education launched two different courses related to lift and escalator for the practicing workers to acquire the required

academic qualifications to meet the registration requirements of Registered Workers;

- The CIC has implemented the “Contractor Cooperative Training Scheme” for the Electrical and Mechanical (E&M) trades (including lift and escalator mechanics) to provide financial support to those who wish to join the lift and escalator industry;
- Since 2016, the EMSD has started to invest more than \$600 million in recruiting over 1 000 technician trainees in five years to provide new bloods for the entire E&M industry (including lift and escalator trade) to cope with future challenges; and
- In early 2018, the EMSD collaborated with the industry to produce a promotional video to attract newcomers to the industry. Production of the video has been completed, which has been uploaded onto the department’s website for public viewing.

12. In light of the fact that more new bloods have joined the industry in the past three years and most of them are still undergoing apprenticeship training, these apprentices are expected to be graduated in the next two to three years and join the industry.

13. The EMSD will also continue to explore with the industry on how to improve the working environment and enhance the quality of maintenance and repair in the industry.

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