

LegCo Panel on Housing

Suspected Use of Rejected Substandard Reinforcement in the Home Ownership Scheme Development at Tung Chung Area 30 Phase 3

Response to questions from Hon LEE Wing-tat

1. The case was reported to the Housing Department by the ICAC earlier this year. Since then, HD has been cooperating with ICAC with their investigation.
2. The Housing Department is not in a position to comment on the ICAC operation.
3. The volume of steel in the batches rejected by the Housing Department is known for the whole project, as is the volume of steel used in the buildings. The rejected batches represent 2-3% of the total volume of bars used in the buildings.

The buildings are safe, and strengthening works will not be required. The Housing Department has undertaken a thorough structural analysis, and this has been checked by an independent consultant.

There is no concern at all over the structural integrity of the buildings. If it is proven that the rejected bars have been used in the construction, this would be a non-compliance with the contract, and action would be taken against the contractor.

4. Problematic batches of steel were identified by the Housing Department during the construction process. They were marked and removed from the site. Testing by material laboratory appointed by HD showed that all the other batches of steel were satisfactory. It is not known exactly where the rejected steel may have been used. This is now being identified. Based on the detailed structural analysis by HD and counter-checked by the

independent consultant, there is no concern for the safety of the structure even if the non-compliant bars are concentrated in one location having regard to its quantity and the degree of non-compliance.

5. The buildings are safe, and strengthening is not required.
6. Under the present system, the deficiencies in the batches of steel were identified by the Housing Department, and the steel was rejected and removed. If it is proven that steel was brought back onto the site, the Housing Department must find out how this was done and plug any loophole. The Department is working closely with the Corruption Prevention Department/ICAC on this review.
7. The possible use of non-compliance bars will not lead to cracking or spalling because the deficiencies do not affect durability of the concrete.
8. There is no concern over the structural integrity of these buildings.
9. The Housing Department staff are committed to Housing Quality. Deficiencies of a limited number of staff is regrettable. Action is being taken at all levels. The Housing Authority has announced 50 areas for action in its Quality Housing initiative. Special attention will be paid to Housing Department reforms. The Housing Department is working closely with the ICAC on improvements to site supervision.

Housing Department
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