

LegCo Panel on Housing
Special meetings on 7, 9 and 14 December 1999
Administration's Response to Members' Questions
about Public Housing Quality

Response from Buildings Department (BD)

1. At present, staff of BD conducts an average of 9 inspections for each construction site, from commencement of foundation works to completion of all building works. To further strengthen our monitoring role, BD plans to increase the frequency of site checks to 12 inspections by early next year.

The items of audit site checks carried out by BD cover -

- (a) Pile driving test;
- (b) Pile loading test;
- (c) Bored pile coring test;
- (d) Strength test on concrete and inspection on the condition of structural elements;
- (e) Checks on dimensions of means of escape, windows areas, floor heights etc.;
- (f) Random checks on construction method statement and procedures against the approved plans; and
- (g) Overall check before the issue of Occupation Permit.

BD will re-deploy staff to cope with the additional workload arising from the increase in site checks.

2. BD is considering a number of measures to improve site supervision. To expedite the task, BD is setting up a Working Group on Building Quality. The Working Group will be chaired by the Director of Buildings and will comprise representatives from the developers, professional institutions and the building industry. The Working Group will explore and recommend new measures for enhancing quality supervision for building works to ensure that quality of buildings meet the required standard.
3. Information on prosecution action taken by BD against registered contractors in the past five years is provided in Tables 1 and 2 at Annex I.

Response from Housing Department (HD)

4. At present, HD does not have any requirements for contractors regarding the employment of permanent construction workers and has not kept such statistics. However, the HD is given to understand that the number of permanent workers employed by contractors varies greatly.
5. According to the information provided by the Construction Industry Training Authority (CITA), there are 128 workers being employed under the Apprenticeship Scheme in a total of 28 Housing Authority contracts at present.
6. The HD first introduced the requirement for contractors to employ a percentage of trade tested workers in 1995. The percentages set for the various trades have gradually increased from 10% on 6 trades in 1995 to 15-35% on 14 trades this year. The percentage requirements are reviewed annually, taking into account the estimated labour requirement of HA contracts, the availability of trade-tested workers, and the training capacity of CITA and the Vocational Training Council. The numbers of HA contracts in which the percentage requirements are implemented in the past five years are given in Annex II.

Housing Department
Buildings Department
8 December 1999

Table 1. Prosecution against piling contractors

Year	Reason for Prosecution	Maximum Fine	No. of Cases	Result	
				Convicted	Total Fine
1995	---	---	---	---	---
1996	---	---	---	---	---
1997	---	---	---	---	---
1998	Works deviated from approved plan (shortened piles)	\$250,000	1	1	\$7,500
1999	Works deviated from approved plan (shortened piles)	\$250,000	5	(pending trial)	

Table 1. Prosecution

Table 2. Prosecution against other contractors

Year	Reason for Prosecution	Maximum Fine	No. of Cases	Result	
				Convicted	Total Fine
1995	carrying out building works in an inappropriate manner	\$250,000	4	4	\$171,000
	building works deviated from approved plan	\$250,000	1	1	\$10,000
	carrying out building works without approval/consent	\$100,000	1	1	\$17,000
1996	carrying out building works in an inappropriate manner	\$250,000	10	7	\$203,000
	building works deviated from approved plan	\$250,000	1	1	\$10,000

Year	Reason for Prosecution	Maximum Fine	No. of Cases	Result	
				Convicted	Total Fine
1996 (Cont' d)	carrying out building works without approval/consent	\$100,000	10	9	\$133,000
	non-compliance with Buildings Authority's imposed conditions for building works	\$250,000	1	0	0
1997	carrying out building works in an inappropriate manner	\$250,000	4	4	\$102,000
	building works deviated from approved plan	\$250,000	1	0	0
1998	carrying out building works in an inappropriate manner	\$250,000	3	1	\$175,000
1999	---	---	---	---	---

Table 2 . Prosecution

**Report on the Implementation of
Trade Testing Certification Requirements**

Implementation	Year			
	1995	1996/97	1998	1999
Approx. No. of Contracts Involved	30	123	15	11

Trade	Percentage Requirement			
	1995	1996/97	1998	1999@
Bricklayer	10%	20%	35%	35%
Plasterer	10%	20%	20%	25%
Tiler	10%	20%	35%	35%
Carpenter (formwork)	10%	20%	20%	25%
Joiner	10%	20%	35%	35%
Painter and Decorator	10%	20%	35%	35%
Plumber	-	20%	35%	35%
Bamboo Scaffolder	-	20%	35%	35%
Marble Worker	-	20%	35%	35%
Leveller	-	20%	35%	35%
Concretor	-	10%	15%	20%
Bar Bender and Fixer	-	10%	15%	20%
Metal Worker	-	10%	10%	15%
General Welder	-	10%	35%	35%
Stone Mason	-	20%	-	-

@ Inclusive of 5% Intermediate Trade Test requirement