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Panel on Development and Panel on Housing

Joint meeting on 8 December 2008

Information note on lift safety

The subject of "Lift safety" has not been discussed by any Panel of the Legislative Council. However, there has been wide coverage on lift safety incidents in local press reports in the past two months. Some relevant press reports are attached at **Appendix I** for members' reference.

2. Two oral questions on the subject were raised by Hon James TO and Hon CHAN Kam-lam at the Council meetings on 19 November 2008 and 3 December 2008 respectively. The wording of the questions and the Administration's replies are in **Appendices II and III**.

Legislative Council Secretariat
Council Business Division 1
4 December 2008

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明報 | 2008-11-04 A02 | 要聞 | 頭條

8 條纜索斷 7 條意外後沒立刻公布婦聞聲逃出電梯飛墜跌散

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【明報專訊】大埔富善邨上月 25 日發生駭人聽聞墜升降機意外，一名婦人在善雅樓高層乘升降機落樓時，突聞異聲，於是急忙打開電梯門走出 14 樓大堂，電梯隨即急速墜至地面損毀不堪，逃出鬼門關的婦人捏一把冷汗。據悉，肇事電梯的 8 條纜索，有 7 條折斷。

有居民指事態嚴重，擔心電梯安全，機電工程署已要求電梯公司在兩星期內提交意外報告。住戶稱，有關方面事後並沒有公布電梯意外事故，居民以為只是「壞？」，懷疑有人刻意隱瞞。

業界擔心超低價招標藏風險電梯業總工會理事長黎志強指事件非常罕見，他稱業界競爭非常激烈，部分法團以超低價為保養合約招標，不少承辦商被迫「將貨就價」，例如減少保養次數和維修人手等，令意外風險增加。

房屋署發言人表示，富善邨屬已售屋邨，屋苑的管理保養已於今年 2 月移交立案法團完全管理。房署於移交管理前已全面檢查升降機及其他設施確保安全。房署非常關注升降機下墜事故，並會檢查其他屋邨的同類型升降機。

保養商上月員工曾罷工爭薪富善邨現由新昌管理服務有限公司負責管理，而升降機保養商為蒂森克虜伯電梯有限公司。本報昨晚向新昌查詢，但至截稿前未獲回覆。「蒂森」上月初曾發生電梯維修員罷工爭加薪工潮，最後勞資達成協議解決。電梯公司的保養經理梁允衡則承認發生墜電梯事件，正與機電署合作調查，他強調公司一直有定期為旗下管理的電梯做檢查及維修。

對於有住戶質疑有關方面事後並沒有公布電梯意外，懷疑有人隱瞞，梁回應稱，意外發生後，公司在緊接的周一（27 日）即時聯絡機電署，因此並非刻意隱瞞事件。

富善邨業主立案法團於上月 31 日在大堂張貼通告講述意外，並表示已求要電梯公司即時檢查同邨其他升降機，以保障住戶安全。有法團人士透露，電梯公司初步匯報稱，經檢查後，肇事電梯的 8 條纜索有 7 條折斷，有關纜索將送交政府化驗所化驗。

途中聞怪聲 14 樓跳出電梯事發於 10 月 25 日（周六）晚上 7 時許，一名婦人在善雅樓高層乘搭編號 L32 升降機落樓時，途中突聞異聲，婦人在 14 樓打開電梯門跑出電梯不久，升降機機箱突急速墜下，跌至地面下的電梯槽底嚴重損毀，技工到場一度未能即時開啓升降機門，各方大為緊張，後技工打開門縫查看，及翻閱錄影帶，證實沒人被困。

大埔區議員任啓邦表示，富善邨自 1986 年建邨以來，22 年來未有換過**升降機**，但零件及纜索時有更換，肇事電梯的纜索 2006 年初曾更換過。而「蒂森」今年 8 月才接管保養事宜，報稱每星期會到邨內做電梯保養及檢查，但在短短兩個月後卻發生嚴重事故，他認為電梯公司責無旁貸。

電梯運作原理及意外估計成因

- 1 框架裝有導靴，維持機箱沿着導軌上下移動
- 2 框架頂連接鋼纜，鋼纜由頂部電機所牽引，帶動機箱上下移動，另一端則帶動「對重」裝置（鉗）作反方向移動
- 3 框架裝有安全鉗，在機箱超速運行或超過運行區時作制動之用
- 4 電梯業總工會理事長黎志強估計，**升降機**下墜與吊起機箱的「纜轆」軸承損毀，導致纜轆脫落而失去承托有關
- 5 電梯槽的頂部或（及）底部設有過籠制，感應機箱的運行範圍，若超出便指令安全鉗制動令升降機停下；機槽底設緩衝裝置，在機箱或鉗掉下時作緩衝之用

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明報 | 2008-11-06 A12 | 港聞 | 特稿 | By 何偉畧陳志偉
電梯年檢大漏洞工程師失蹤照簽名業界促機電署即場突擊檢查

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富善邨**升降機**斷纜意外，令人關注全港逾 5 萬部**升降機**的維修監管問題。本報發現，賴以確保**升降機**安全的「周年檢驗」存在監管漏洞，包括機電署不會在電梯年檢時作即場突擊檢查，導致維修商可能心存僥倖，違法不派工程師到場監察年檢，卻照樣在年檢報告上簽名作實。機電署總機電工程師凌錦開回應時承認，過去確曾揭發有**升降機**工程師未有依法在場監察**升降機**年檢，對於業界建議引入「即場突擊檢查」，凌說會考慮。

#### 法例要求工程師在場監督

機電署昨晚補充，署方會根據富善邨意外調查結果，檢討現行規管制度。目前機電署對**升降機**安全已有監管，規定維修承辦商須派員至少每月作一次例行維修檢查，另每年要作一次「周年檢查（年檢）」，對鋼纜、限速器、安全鉗等重要安全設施作適當檢查，法例還要求一名註冊**升降機**工程師在場監察，確保年檢各項安全測試合格，電梯才可繼續運作。

但電梯業總工會理事黎志強透露，有維修商疑為省成本，會「出術」安排一名工程師同一時間監察多部不同地點**升降機**的年檢，做法疑有違安全規定。更甚者，曾有工程師根本不在現場，卻仍違法簽名聲稱**升降機**年檢測試沒問題，最終被機電署揭發。

黎認為，問題是機電署只對年檢作「事後抽查（10% 個案）」，他建議署方強制要求承辦商須事先通知機電署電梯年檢時間，讓機電署可隨時派員即場突擊檢查，以保證年檢程序做足。

#### 人手不足月檢工序難做足

電梯業總工會秘書余添則指出，即使是每月例行檢查，電梯技工也常因人手不足而未能做足。他舉例，電梯技工保養電梯時，原至少要檢查各樓層**升降機**門是否正常運作、以及加入潤滑油（「抹油」），但礙於人手有限，有時連抹油都不夠時間；若附近大廈有人困？，技工更可能被迫先趕往緊急維修，致保養工作草草收場。

工會又指，在網綁式招標價低者得下，每部**升降機**每月保養費從 6000 元跌至約千多元，**升降機**公司為求提高利潤，令電梯技工工作量大增。

機電署以往與**升降機**公司有口頭協議，應由兩名技工負責保養，及每部電梯保養約需 90 分鐘，但事實是現時不少電梯技工都被迫單獨保養電梯，在「叫地不聞」環境下工作，若發生意外可能會無人知。另外若未能妥善完成保養，亦會令使用者安全受威脅。立法會勞工界議員葉偉明表示，工會將於明天約見發展局長林鄭月娥，要求取消網綁式招標，並立法規定必須由兩人負責電梯保養工作，及訂明工作時間標準。

明報記者何偉畧陳志偉

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星島日報 | 2008-11-08 A12 | 港聞 電梯工會力數業內弊病

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大埔富善邨電梯斷纜意外，揭露機電署監管指引不足弊病。有工會代表昨日與發展局官員會面，反映業內最新情況。會後代表引述該局回應指，將會在討論電梯安全的委員會上，商討改善安全及提升監察水平的方法。

促改革註冊制度

香港電梯業總工會五名代表，昨午與發展局局長林鄭月娥及機電工程署署長會面，反映業界現時面對的問題。工會代表要求改革電梯工人的註冊制度，並提出在進行**升降機**維修工作時，應至少由兩名工人同時工作等建議。

代表指出，本港目前一般採用的捆綁式招標做法，令工友須同時維修不同機種的**升降機**，但在培訓不足下，工友未必熟悉全部機種。加上招標以價低者得，維修公司在資源不足下會削減人手，大多時間都交由一人自行工作，有可能影響整體維修水平。

陪同會面的工聯會立法會議員葉偉明認為，為加強教育業主立案法團，建議當局可提供參考價格，防止承辦商以過低價格投標，影響維修質素。另外，他又建議在電梯每年年檢時，提早七天通知機電署，讓當局進行突擊檢查。

代表續指，局方在會上給予正面回應，並答應在討論電梯安全的委員會上，商討改善安全及提升監察水平的方法。但工會仍將如期在本月中發起遊行，表達訴求。本報記者

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東方日報 | 2008-11-11 A14 | 港聞

尖旺各一宗**升降機**故障

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【本報訊】尖沙咀及旺角昨發生兩宗**升降機**事故，其中尖沙咀一幢大廈疑因機房滑輪積聚塵埃摩擦起火，由消防員撲熄，無人受傷。肇事**升降機**的保養商，與富善邨出事**升降機**的生產商屬同一公司。

首宗事故現場是金巴利道太平洋大廈，昨晨十時許，搬屋公司工人在五樓搬傢俬落樓，在?內聞到燒焦味，隨即機頂有火屑掉下，通知保安員報警。

消防員發現樓頂機房一組滑輪着火，用滅火筒將火撲熄，疑滑輪機油積聚及沾滿塵埃，經摩擦生熱着火。

**升降機**的保養商通力電梯（香港）有限公司獲通知派員到場檢驗，據發言人稱，該**升降機**證實安全，事故原因將進一步調查。發言人續稱，有關**升降機**對上一次檢驗是於上周四，有關**升降機**並非通力公司生產，與富善邨墮?意外的**升降機**不同款。

四小時後，通菜街的東威大廈一名姓胡新住戶與友人、菲傭及搬運工人乘**升降機**上樓，升至八樓時突然停下，消防員及電梯公司人員到場，將四人救出。

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~~~~~ #33 ~~~~~  
明報 | 2008-11-12 A10 | 港聞 運頭塘邨升降機斷纜 事發周日安全掣鎖死防下墜居民救出  
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【明報專訊】繼大埔富善邨發生升降機斷纜下墜事故後，同區另一房委會出售屋邨運頭塘邨周日亦發生困?斷纜事故。當日下午運臨樓一部升降機在載人期間，4 條綱纜中有 1 條突然斷裂，幸好安全掣即時鎖死升降機以防下墜，被困居民被安全救出。有區議員指出「斷纜」事故兩個屋苑均由新昌管理公司負責管理，促請管理公司盡快交代調查結果。

電梯業總工會理事長黎志強表示，升降機保養合約五花八門，合約條文對綱纜等零件的更換次數和費用承擔亦存在灰色地帶，法團應仔細留意條款，並促請政府全面檢討現行升降機保養制度。

4 纜 1 斷裂機電署周一接報機電工程署發言人說，意外翌日即周一（10 日）接獲運頭塘邨管理公司上報事件，已即時派員視察。機電署初步調查顯示，該升降機的 4 條綱纜中，其中一條折斷，安全系統即停止升降機運作，事件中無人受傷。

事發後升降機已暫停運作。

發言人又稱，該升降機是由生產商富士達（香港）有限公司負責原廠保養，今年 1 月 31 日通過年檢。機電署已即時檢查運頭塘邨其餘 11 部富士達升降機，證實全部操作安全。機電署將調查事故成因，並要求保養承建商在 7 個工作天內（19 日前）提交報告。

據管理公司在邨內張貼的通告透露，意外於周日下午 5 時發生，當時運臨樓第四號升降機載人至 7 樓時突然停頓，管理處即時通知消防處和升降機保養商到場救援和檢查，救出被困居民。本報記者昨在運臨樓下遇到一名女子，她承認是當日被困者之一，但拒評當日詳情。

事發後管理公司只暫停升降機運作，至意外翌日才張貼通告交代故障和上報機電署。

機電署周一下午到場檢查後，確認有一條綱纜斷裂，但斷裂原因有待調查。

與富善邨同屬新昌管理

斷纜意外令邨內居民人心惶惶，家住運臨樓 23 樓的黃先生說，瀏覽互聯網才知道升降機斷纜，他指日常乘搭升降機無發現異樣，維修次數亦算頻密，對意外感到十分焦慮。

運頭塘邨和早前發生升降機斷纜事故的富善邨，同屬新昌管理服務有限公司負責

管理，大埔區議員余智榮稱，由於兩邨均由同一管理公司負責，邨民已人心惶惶，又擔心公司的管理保養質素，促請管理公司盡快交代兩宗意外的調查結果。

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東方日報 | 2008-11-14 A26 | 港聞 消防員救人反要人救

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【本報訊】自大埔富善邨墮?事件後，電梯安全特別惹人關注，困?事故竟無日無之。昨日藍田、鰂魚涌及尖沙咀先後發生壞?困人事件，其中一隊消防員登樓救人，卻遭困?，救人不成反要人救，由同袍到場救出，幸奉派處理的事件只屬誤會，並無延誤。

昨午二時許，一名姓楊老翁（六十七歲）返抵德田邨德樂樓家門前，始知忘記帶鎖匙，多次拍門無回應，擔心姓馮妻子（六十一歲）在內發生意外，報警求助。

一隊消防員乘電梯上樓時，突遇上壞?，他們試圖解困失敗，向上峰求助，由增援同袍開啓?門，但已被困八分鐘。

### 港鐵月台升降機故障

事件幸無延誤救人，因事發時救護員已率先到達，未待消防員到來，已用工具破門而入，證實屋內的婦人安然無恙，只是熟睡聽不到拍門聲，引起誤會。

另一宗電梯事故發生於鰂魚涌港鐵站，早上十一時許，港島線月台一部往將軍澳線月台的升降機突然失靈，職員聽到警鐘聲，立即報警。消防員花十分鐘將?門開啓，將被困?內十三人救出。

晚上七時，彌敦道八十二號尖沙咀滙豐大廈內的貨?又發生故障，因正值下班繁忙間，十多人被困，大廈保安員致電報警，消防員將被困者救出，事後電梯暫停使用，由技工檢查維修。

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~~~~~ #13 ~~~~~  
成報 | 2008-11-16 A07 | 港聞 機電署：翠屏邨升降機非急墮

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【記者程泰祖報道】觀塘翠屏南邨的升降機日前又再發生事故障，機電工程署指該部升降機並沒有急墮，只是停止運作，而房署檢驗後認為升降機纜索無問題，不影響安全故決定重開。

觀塘翠屏南邨於上周四(13日)，有多名居民在翠杭樓19樓進入升降機，居民表示升降機到13樓時突然發出巨響，之後急降至10樓，再慢慢降至地下。

機電署署長何光偉昨日主持「機電安全嘉年華2008」開幕儀式後指出，肇事的升降機沒有急墮，只是停止運作。房署檢驗後，認為升降機纜索無問題，不會影響安全，決定重開升降機。

業界檢查數千電梯

機電署將會加強抽查全港升降機，由每10部抽查1部，增至每8部抽查1部，並會集中抽查保養差、機齡長，以及與大埔富善相同型號的升降機，預料約有500部升降機，署方期望3個月內完成檢查。

另外，電梯業協會會長郭海生歡迎政府加強抽查電梯，並指業界一直有為電梯進行定期檢查，近期便曾檢查數千部電梯，結果未有發現問題。

「機電安全嘉年華2008」今日繼續在銅鑼灣維多利亞公園舉行，由機電署主辦，為「機電安全香港通2008」的重點活動，目的旨在提升市民對使用電器及電力裝置、氣體用具、升降機、扶手電梯、機動遊戲及鐵路的安全意識和良好習慣，以及提倡節約能源，今年共有18家來自不同行業的機構參與。

活動亦鼓勵市民自小養成安全和節約能源的習慣，今年特別着重在互聯網平台上與兒童及青少年溝通，推出了一個專題入門網站(<http://www.emsd.gov.hk/emsd/emsafetycampaign>)，並在青少年熱門網站展示廣告，及舉辦網上問答比賽等。

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~~~~~ #1 ~~~~~  
蘋果日報 | 2008-11-27 A06 | 港聞 『車立』困 8 人揭通報機制欠善

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【本報訊】近月多宗**升降機**事故令人擔心當局對**升降機**監管不足，昨日牛頭角安基苑又有**升降機**失靈，8 名住客被困 15 分鐘。另外上周四，有市民在鰂魚涌港島東中心，由 34 樓乘**升降機**到地面時，**升降機**急速下墮至 22 樓，負責監管**升降機**的機電署竟不知事件，署方向承辦商查詢時，對方竟訛稱無人被困。學者批評，機電署只要求承辦商就發生有人傷亡事故報告的機制有漏洞，要求修例。牛頭角安基苑昨日的事故發生於早上 11 時許，基仁閣住客鍾先生離開寓所乘**升降機**到地面，其間**升降機**在其他樓層接載另外 7 名住客，但當**升降機**抵達停車場 2 樓時突然上下擺動及停下。當時**升降機**內電燈及風扇如常啟動，鍾先生即時按警鐘要求管理員安排維修。

### 港島東電梯急墮 12 層樓

10 分鐘後援兵未到，一名患心臟病、曾進行通波仔手術老翁稱心曩暈眩，鍾先生再按警鐘求救，他指管理員得悉有人不適才報警。5 分鐘後維修員到場控制**升降機**到地面，消防員救出各人及將不適老翁送院，幸無大礙。負責安基苑**升降機**維修的奧的斯電梯公司發言人稱，事故不涉鋼纜問題，並指肇事**升降機**於今年 2 月通過安全年檢，本月 12 日亦通過例行檢查。另外上周四，有市民在鰂魚涌華蘭路港島東中心，由 34 樓乘**升降機**到地面時，**升降機**突然急速下墮至 22 樓，事件雖無人受傷，但負責監管**升降機**安全的機電署竟不知事件，連署方向承辦商查詢，對方亦一度訛稱事故中無人被困。署方稍後再查詢，承辦商才承認有人被困，但署方解釋現行法例下不需就無人受傷事故通報，至於當日事故因**升降機**安全感應系統故障，機電署工程師事後測試發現**升降機**運作正常。理工大學機械工程學系盧覺強工程師批評現行機電署的通報機制未能有效監管承辦商，希望當局修改法例，要求承辦商每當發生**升降機**故障便作通報，確保安全。

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~~~~~ #2 ~~~~~

南華早報 | 2008-11-05 CITY1| CITY| By Celine Sun

Lift that plunged 14 floors passed tests in January

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Inspection of 1,000 lifts ordered after elevator plummeted

A lift in a public housing **estate** that plunged 14 floors - sparking checks on 1,000 similar lifts in housing estates - passed a safety examination in January, officials said yesterday.

No one was in the lift car on Tai Po's **Fu Shin Estate** when it made its sudden plunge but a woman had got out moments earlier after hearing a strange sound.

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department confirmed yesterday that the lift car, in **Shin Nga House**, had plummeted when its speed governor failed to function. Seven of the car's eight suspension cables were later found to be broken.

The plunge occurred on October 25 but was not disclosed by the department until it was reported in some newspapers yesterday.

The cause of the accident is still being investigated but the department said yesterday that damage had been found to the cables, governor, lift car and counterweight. All other lifts on the **estate** had been checked and found to be safe.

A woman, who gave her name only as Lau, said she was waiting to take the lift downstairs with her daughter when she saw the passenger getting out. "She looked scared and said to me, 'I might have been trapped in the lift if you didn't press the button'. After that, the lift then just fell down," Ms Lau said.

The department's chief electrical and mechanical engineer, George Ling Kam-hoi, said that although seven out of eight steel cables broke, safety clamps should have stopped the lift from falling. He said the bottom of the lift was not damaged, but the pulleys had come off and crashed onto the top of the lift.

He said any defects should have been noticed in regular checks and inspections. "Any damaged parts should be changed first. The engineer responsible for the regular check should then inform us. After we have checked everything then we will issue certificates for them."

The Housing Authority yesterday told the two lift companies involved - the maker and the maintenance provider - to inspect the 1,000-plus lifts of the same type in use in the city's public estates. A report will be submitted to the authority within two days.

A spokesman for the mechanical services department said the incident was a "very rare case", which was why the department had not revealed it for a week. "We hoped to inform the public after we completed the investigation," he said.

The lift, produced and installed by Finland-based manufacturer Kone Elevator, had been in use on the public **estate** for 22 years. The company had managed the maintenance work until July, when the **estate** owners' corporation decided to change to another maintenance provider, ThyssenKrupp Elevator Hong Kong, which offered a cheaper service.

The General Union of Lift and Escalator Employees said the incident could be partly connected to the standard of service of the maintenance company and possibly a lack of government regulation.

"It's not a normal practice for one company to do maintenance work for elevators made by another company," union general secretary Tsang Chi-kong said. The manufacturer usually had a better understanding of its machines and knew which parts were most likely to get damaged.

"It's so fortunate there's no injury this time. The authorities should really take it as an alert," he said.

Last month, about 60 workers of ThyssenKrupp Elevator went on strike in Hung Hom to demand more staff and higher pay.

Tai Po district councillor Kwan Wing-yip, who examined the site yesterday, said a human factor could not be ruled out as the breaks in the cables were very close to each other.

"We suggested to the owners' corporation that it should hire a third party to conduct an independent investigation," he said.

文章編號: 200811050270110

~~~~~ #5 ~~~~~  
南華早報 | 2008-11-11 CITY4| CITY| By Martin Wong and Danny Mok  
Blaze in lift shaft comes days after checks begin  
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A fire broke out at the top of a lift shaft in a Tsim Sha Tsui building yesterday morning, days after the government ordered safety checks on 1,000 lifts across the city following an accident in Tai Po. The same company, Finland-based manufacturer Kone Elevator, is involved in both incidents.

And last night three members of a family were trapped in a lift on **Fu Shin Estate**, the same **estate** where a lift plunged 14 floors on October 25.

Shortly before 11am, residents of Pacific Mansion, a commercial and business building on Kimberley Road, detected a burning smell coming from one of the two lifts. A security guard called fire services officers, who discovered a fire in a room on the roof that housed the motors and cables for the lifts.

Firemen used an extinguisher to douse the flames. No one was injured, a government spokesman said. Police said a short circuit was the suspected cause of the blaze.

Kone, which is responsible for maintenance of the lifts, said there had been a misunderstanding. As far as I know, there was no fire but only smoke, service director Jonny Leung said. And without having to fix anything, the lift works normally.

Officers from the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department were present when their workers inspected the lift, Mr Leung said.

He said the company was checking whether the incident was caused by something else in the room. There are many things in the machine room, including the building's electrical cables.

The two lifts resumed service after inspection. A spokesman for the department said it was checking when Kone last inspected the lift.

In the **Fu Shin Estate** incident last night, a man surnamed Lau, 33, said a lift in **Shin King House** had fallen for two feet shortly after he entered on the 33th floor at 8.30pm. It then came to a standstill. He said he forced open the doors after 10 minutes when no one had arrived to help so he and his two family members could get out.

Kone produced and installed the lift in Tai Po's **Fu Shin Estate** that plunged 14 floors on October 25. No one was in the lift car when it fell, but a woman had got out moments earlier after hearing a strange sound.

A check found seven of the lift's eight suspension cables were broken, and the speed governor, lift car and counterweight were damaged.

The company had managed the maintenance work in that case until July, when the **estate** owners' corporation decided to change to another maintenance provider, ThyssenKrupp Elevator Hong Kong, which offered a cheaper service.

That accident, described by the government as a very rare case, raised concerns over the safety of the 57,000 lifts and 7,000 escalators used across the city.

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~~~~~ #6 ~~~~~  
南華早報 | 2008-11-12 CITY4| CITY| By Anita Lam

Broken cable found in Tai Po lift incident

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One of the four cables supporting a lift in which five people were trapped in a Tai Po **estate** on Sunday has been found to have broken.

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department revealed the incident, which left the occupants stranded between the seventh and eighth floors of Wan Lam House, Wan Tau Tong **Estate**, after checking the **estate's** 11 other lifts yesterday.

It was the fourth incident involving lift safety in three weeks, including one on Monday night at **Fu Shin Estate** which left a family trapped for at least 10 minutes. On October 25, a lift there plunged 14 floors.

All the other lifts in Wan Tau Tong **Estate** were found to be safe but Tai Po district councillor Yu Chi-wing said residents were fearful and some living on the lower floors preferred to use the stairs. Officials are investigating the cause of the incident, while the lift's manufacturer and maintenance provider, Fujitec, will have to submit a report on the case before next Wednesday. The department has not yet decided if it will order checks on all other lifts of the same model and age, as it did following the 14-floor plunge at **Fu Shin Estate**.

The department said Fujitec workers had spotted the broken cable after staff and firemen rescued the trapped people on Sunday.

Lo Kok-keung, a mechanical engineer at Hong Kong Polytechnic, said many lifts, especially in areas with older buildings, could have similar problems due to poor maintenance.

The department said it had found no mechanical defects in the lift that left the family stranded at **Fu Shin Estate** on Monday.

Senior engineer Arthur Wong Kam-hay said the case was a regular lift-trap incident, triggered by a sensor that could become overly sensitive when the weather changed.

The department said maintenance provider Thyssenkrupp Elevator had already adjusted the sensors in the rest of the **estate's** 34 lifts.

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~~~~~ #16 ~~~~~

南華早報 | 2008-11-15 CITY1| CITY

**Lift safety**

Elevator ok, says Housing Department

There was nothing wrong with a **lift** at Kwun Tong's Tsui Ping South Estate that a resident said fell three floors, the Housing Department said yesterday. The resident told Cable TV that when she used the **lift** in Tsui Hon House on Thursday, it suddenly fell from the 13th floor to the 10th before continuing to the ground normally. A department spokesman said all three lifts in the building were inspected yesterday and no problems were found. Cheung Chi-fai

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~~~~~ #12 ~~~~~

南華早報 | 2008-11-24 CITY4| CITY| By Peter So

Lift workers demand strict safety standards

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About 100 **lift** workers staged a protest yesterday to highlight occupational safety concerns following **lift**-maintenance accidents earlier this month.

They called for more training, a qualifications framework, the regulation of standard shift hours and a ban on contractors working alone.

Meanwhile, the government said it would stop using a bunching approach - in which **lift** contractors are required to maintain different brands of **lift** under a single contract - in tendering for **lift**-maintenance contracts for government buildings.

A Development Bureau spokesman said the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department would meet workers' representatives and **lift** contractors today to review a code of practice with a view to strengthening safety requirements. He said the department would also conduct random inspections of lifts in private buildings during the next three months.

Tsang Chi-kong, secretary of the General Union of **Lift** and Escalator Employees, said the government had yet to respond to calls for a qualifications framework, which would guarantee workers received proper training.

He said the government should strictly enforce regulations governing the frequency and duration of **lift**-maintenance procedures for contractors because many had deviated from the rules to cut costs.

The union welcomed the government initiative to end the bunching approach in contracting out **lift**-maintenance services, Mr Tsang said.

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**Oral question on "Lift safety"
raised at the meeting of the Legislative Council on 19 November 2008
and the Administration's reply**

(This question was raised by Hon James TO)

Question:

The incident of a lift in Fu Shin Estate, a public housing estate, plunging to the ground, which occurred last month, has aroused public concern about the safety of lifts. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) why the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department ("EMSD") did not immediately make an announcement following the occurrence of the aforesaid serious incident which involved breakage of suspension ropes of the lift, but confirmed it only upon media enquiries 10 days later; of the respective numbers of cases in the past three years in which owners of lifts or registered lift contractors ("the contractors") notified and did not notify EMSD immediately of incidents involving lifts as required by law, the number of such cases announced by EMSD, as well as the penalties imposed on those people convicted on grounds of not immediately making a notification or other contraventions;
- (b) given that currently a single contractor is selected by tender to undertake maintenance of the lifts in a public housing estate which were manufactured by different manufacturers, whether the authorities will review the arrangement, and whether they will conduct comprehensive inspections on all the other lifts in public housing estates which are maintained by the contractor involved in the above incident; and
- (c) how the authorities presently monitor the repair and maintenance of lifts in various kinds of buildings, and whether they will carry out surprise checks on the annual safety inspections conducted by registered lift engineers, checking if the quality of the parts used by the contractors meets the statutory requirements and safety standards, as well as amending existing guidelines or codes of practice (e.g. to require that the inspection and maintenance work be carried out by at least two repair workers, and to introduce a minimum number of inspection hours, etc.)?

Reply:

President,

The Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance (Cap 327) provides the statutory framework to ensure safety of lifts in private buildings in Hong Kong. Under the Ordinance, only registered lift engineers and registered lift contractors are qualified to carry out lift works including construction, installation and maintenance service. These works shall comply with the required safety standards according to the Code of Practice promulgated by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department ("EMSD"). The Ordinance requires the EMSD, as the regulatory authority, to maintain registers for qualified engineers and contractors.

Lifts in public housing estates managed by the Hong Kong Housing Authority are not governed by the Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance. However, the Housing Department, being the authority responsible for the regulation and maintenance of lifts in public housing estates, follows the requirements under the Ordinance as the basis for regulation of lifts. In this regard, the Secretary for Transport and Housing will respond to Members' questions on lifts in public housing estates in the supplementary questions and answers session.

The Administration's reply to the three-part question is as follows:

- (a) Section 27A of the Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance requires that certain lift incidents shall be reported. After the occurrence of the prescribed lift incidents, the owner of a lift shall immediately notify the EMSD and the registered lift contractor. The registered lift contractor shall, on receipt of the notification, immediately carry out investigation and shall, within seven working days, submit a report to the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services.

The lift incident occurred in Fu Shin Estate is an incident prescribed in section 27A. On receipt of the notification, the EMSD immediately carried out an investigation and inspected all lifts of the same type in Fu Shin Estate, and found no similar problems. The registered lift contractor, in accordance with the Ordinance, submitted a preliminary report within seven working days from the occurrence of the incident.

The EMSD at that time considered that the incident needed further investigation. The major damaged parts of the lift were sent to laboratory for a detailed analysis of the cause of damage. The Department has also subsequently conducted checks on about 500 lifts of the same model in Hong Kong. Therefore, the Fu Shin Estate incident was not announced to the public immediately. Since lift safety is an item of a high level of concern of the public, the EMSD has undertaken that, if any serious lift

incident occurs in future, the Department will announce the incident as early as possible so as to ease public concern.

Over the past three years, the EMSD has not received any reports on lift incidents similar to the one occurred in Fu Shin Estate (i.e. breakage of a number of suspension ropes of a lift at the same time). I would elaborate that in the past four years, there were cases of breakage of suspension ropes in lifts but each only involved one rope and not a number of ropes. There was one case of breakage of one suspension rope in a lift in Fung Tak Estate, Wong Tai Sin, in May 2005 and there was breakage of one suspension rope in a lift with four suspension ropes in Poplar Street, Sham Shui Po, on October 14, 2008. The EMSD did not announce the cases based on its considerations at that time.

Of the reports of other incidents received by the EMSD under section 27A of the Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance, they mainly fall under two categories. For incidents not involving equipment failure (e.g. caused by careless use of lifts by passengers), there were 132 cases in 2008 (up to end September), 224 in 2007 and 201 in 2006.

For incidents involving equipment failure which resulted in breakdown of lifts but without affecting their safety, the number was 21 in 2008 (up to end September), 27 in 2007 and 31 in 2006.

The causes for most of the above incidents could be immediately traced. The equipment failure only happened in the individual lifts, and had no implications on the safety of all lifts of the same model or other similar installations. Regarding those incidents involving careless use of lift and for which ambulances were called, the media would notice the same immediately and make appropriate reports. The EMSD therefore did not make any particular announcement of such incidents.

In the past, the EMSD did not discover any cases in which immediate notification of the occurrence of incidents as required by the Ordinance were not made to it.

- (b) Lifts in all public housing estates and individual Home Ownership Scheme estates where owners' corporations have not yet been formed are under the direct management of the Housing Department. The routine repair and maintenance services of all lifts under the direct management of the Housing Department are carried out by the original maintenance contractors. No arrangement has been made for the provision of maintenance service by a single contractor for lifts made by different manufacturers. In the wake of the lift incident in Fu Shin Estate, the Housing Department had immediately instructed the relevant maintenance contractors to complete inspecting lifts in those estates under its direct

management before 6 November this year. The contractors had finished the inspections and confirmed that the lift operations were normal. In addition, the Housing Department had asked all its lift maintenance contractors who provide relevant service that in conducting routine checks and maintenance service every week, they shall follow the latest Technical Circular issued to the industry by the EMSD in November this year to additionally inspect the cable systems and overspeed governors of the lifts. Lifts in the estates under the Tenant Purchase Scheme (e.g. Fu Shin Estate) are maintained and repaired by the contractors appointed by their owners' corporations and are regulated by the EMSD.

According to our understanding, Fu Shin Estate has adopted the tendering approach in arranging for the provision of lift maintenance service by a single contractor for lifts made by different manufacturers. Such tendering arrangement has also been adopted for the maintenance contracts of a small number of Government properties by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund under the EMSD. To reinforce the quality of lift maintenance, I have already asked the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund to adjust its future tendering arrangements.

- (c) The Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance regulates the cycles of periodic maintenance, periodic examination and periodic testing for lifts in private buildings, which include inspection and testing with loading once every five years, annual inspection and testing, as well as monthly routine maintenance and inspection. Lift works could only be carried out by registered lift engineers and registered lift contractors, who shall provide lift maintenance services in accordance with the safety guidelines drawn up in line with the international standards and the requirements of the Code of Practice. Also, to ensure the quality of lift components, the major safety components of lift installations must possess the test certificates issued by accredited independent testing institutes. Currently, the EMSD conducts audit inspections for 10% of the lifts in private buildings every year. Samples are selected under the principle of risk assessment. The Department also carries out surprise checks to ensure that the services provided by contractors are up to standard. Regarding lifts in Government buildings, at present, the repair and maintenance works are undertaken by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund. The Trading Fund also arranges the relevant works in accordance with the requirements and technical standards of the Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance, and monitors the works as appropriate.

For lifts in public housing estates, the Housing Department is responsible for their repair and maintenance. Although lifts in public housing estates are not covered by the Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance, the Housing Department employs lift engineers and contractors registered under the Ordinance to conduct lift repair and maintenance works according to all the

requirements and standards under the Ordinance and the EMSD guidelines. Moreover, with reference to the current arrangement of the EMSD, the Independent Checking Unit of the Housing Department examines one-tenth of the periodic examinations and testings carried out by lift maintenance contractors, so as to monitor the performance of engineers and contractors.

Although statistics do not reveal an increasing trend of lift incidents in private buildings in recent years, the Government is highly concerned about the recent lift incidents and will take immediate measures to enhance the existing regulatory framework in order to further improve lift safety in private buildings in Hong Kong. The EMSD will redeploy resources to strengthen audit inspection in the next three months. It will also review the long-term inspection programme with regard to the investigation results of the recent lift incidents as well as the effectiveness of other measures, so as to ensure the effective operation of the regulatory mechanism.

With a view to further strengthening the requirements of lift safety, the EMSD will consult the contractors and workers' representatives on a review of the existing Code of Practice through an existing working group. The Code of Practice will specify the procedures, frequency and time of repair and maintenance to ensure lift safety. The working group will convene a meeting this month.

**Oral question on "Lift safety"
raised at the meeting of the Legislative Council on 3 December 2008
and the Administration's reply**

(This question was raised by Hon CHAN Kam-lam)

Question:

As accidents which involved the plunging of lifts and snapping of lift suspension ropes recently occurred one after another in public housing estates ("PHEs") - Fu Shin Estate, Wan Tau Tong Estate and Tsui Ping South Estate, public housing residents are very concerned about the safety of lifts in their PHEs. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the criteria adopted by the Housing Department ("HD") for selecting contractors for the installation and maintenance of lifts in PHEs; whether HD will revise such criteria in the wake of the above accidents; whether the housing estates under the Tenants Purchase Scheme ("TPS estates") which have not yet formed their owners' corporations are still using the same lift maintenance contractors originally engaged by HD;
- (b) given that HD would have handed over the estate management to the owners' corporations of TPS estates upon their establishment, whether HD has monitored the lift maintenance standards of such PHEs to safeguard the safety of tenants; if so, whether it has assessed effectiveness of the monitoring work; and
- (c) whether HD has any measure to ensure that the quality of lift maintenance service will not be affected by adopting the tendering practice of "the lowest bidder wins" when the TPS estates which have not yet formed owners' corporations are selecting lift maintenance contractors?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the three-part question is as follows:

- (a) Apart from the procurement and installation of lifts, the tender contracts on lift works of the Housing Authority (HA) requires the provision of future maintenance and repair services so as to ensure that the lifts are maintained by the original contractors. Lift contractors bidding for HA's tenders must

be a lift contractor on the approved list maintained by the HA. These listed contractors of the HA must be a lift contractor registered with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) and meet other requirements such as experience and financial condition prescribed by the HA. Contractors failing to meet the performance standards specified by the HA or having dereliction of duty (e.g. serious industrial accident) will be disqualified from submitting tenders temporarily or be removed from the approved list.

When vetting tenders, apart from considering the bidding price, the HA will also make a full assessment and analysis on all factors including past performance, professional capability, financial condition and safety records of the contractors. As such, the lowest bidder may not necessarily win the contract.

With respect to lifts in public housing estates under the HA, even though the lifts in the same estates are of different brands due to different completion dates or phases of development, the Housing Department (HD) will follow the principle of maintaining the lifts by original contractors: the contractors that are the selling agent of the brand of the lifts will be engaged in providing maintenance works for that brand of lifts. The HD will not ask the contractors to carry out maintenance works for lifts of brands other than those for which the contractors are the selling agents. In other words, the HD will not adopt the "bunching approach" for lift maintenance. The HA will continue with its existing arrangement of engaging original contractors to provide lift maintenance to ensure that the lifts are maintained in the best operation condition when providing safe and reliable service for the tenants.

With all 39 Tenants Purchase Scheme estates (TPS estates) having formed their Owners' Corporations (OCs) under the Building Management Ordinance, the duty of appointing lift contractors for maintenance service has been handed over to these OCs.

- (b) As with other private housing estates, the management and maintenance of the TPS estates are undertaken by their OCs, and the day-to-day business of the OCs is run by their management committees. Hence, the OC is the body that bears ultimate responsibility for monitoring matters such as day-to-day management and maintenance of the estates. Being the owner of the unsold flats of the TPS estates, HA participates in the management of the estates by appointing an officer of the HD as a member of the management committee. The HA representative will assist the OCs in the proper and effective management of the estates as far as possible, and encourage the owners to make decisions in the overall interests of the estates, so as to safeguard the interests of all owners and the HA.

Like other private buildings, lifts in TPS estates are regulated by Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance (Chapter 327). Therefore, as stipulated in the law, only registered lift engineers and registered lift contractors are qualified to carry out maintenance works for the lifts in TPS estates. These works shall be conducted in compliance with the safety standards according to the Code of Practice promulgated by the regulatory authority, i.e. the EMSD.

- (c) As I have mentioned before, OCs have been established in all TPS estates. The management of these estates, including the handling of maintenance matters, has also been handed over to these OCs. In owners' meetings, the HA's representative will only vote for the appointment of the original contractor to undertake the maintenance service so as to ensure that the best lift maintenance arrangement is adopted.