

**For discussion
on 23 February 2010**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON DEVELOPMENT**

Building Safety

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of the Administration's package of measures for enhancing building safety, and invites Members' views on them and their suggestions on how the effort could be strengthened.

BACKGROUND

2. The tragic building collapse incident at 45J, Ma Tau Wai Road on 29 January 2010 has led to casualties and other losses for tens of families also in the neighbouring buildings. While the cause of the incident is under investigation, it has once again aroused the general concern of the whole community over building safety. Despite our on-going efforts, that have been enhanced in recent years, to promote proper building maintenance, assist owners in carrying out maintenance works, and enforce the relevant legislation against unauthorized building works (UBWs) and to require owners to carry out repair works, the incident has revealed that public awareness of building safety is still weak in Hong Kong. It has reminded us that the whole community, including the Government, building owners, occupants, building professionals, the development industry as well as supporting non-governmental organisations, need to further enhance our concerted efforts towards building safety.

3. Building safety is a highly complex and multi-faceted issue. If not addressed early, the problem will only get more serious as Hong Kong's building stock continues to grow old - it is estimated that there are currently about 17,000 buildings aged 30 years or above and, in ten years, the number will reach 28,000. To tackle this problem, all concerned stakeholders must play their due roles. It is a general community

consensus established in our previous rounds of public consultation on building management and maintenance that building owners have the ultimate responsibility to properly maintain their own properties and keep them in good repair. While the Government will continue our part in providing support and assistance to owners in need as well as taking enforcement against non-compliant cases, building owners must strengthen their effort in arresting the problem of deterioration of building conditions. It is also necessary for us to work closely with building professionals, the industry as well as supporting non-government organisations to jointly promote a building safety culture amongst building owners, occupants, contractors and workers.

4. To tackle the problem of building neglect in a sustainable manner, we have to optimise available resources and maximise synergy amongst the various stakeholders involved in building management and maintenance. The approach should be multi-pronged, covering the following four major areas -

- (a) legislation;
- (b) enforcement;
- (c) support and assistance; and
- (d) publicity and public education.

PACKAGE OF MEASURES TO ENHANCE BUILDING SAFETY

(A) Legislation

5. To provide and maintain a modernised, efficient and user-friendly statutory building control regime to meet the development needs of Hong Kong, the Government has been taking progressive steps to update and refine the statute with a view to improving building safety. They include the introduction of minor works control system, mandatory building and window inspection schemes and compulsory land sale for redevelopment.

Minor Works Control System

6. The minor works control system aims to provide a lawful, simple, safe as well as convenient means for building owners to carry out small-scale building works in order to improve safety standard of building works and facilitate compliance.

7. Under the existing Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) (BO), all building works, despite their scale and complexity, are regulated under one single building control system. Prior approval of building plans and consent to commence building works has to be obtained from the Building Authority (BA). This control system does not differentiate building works relating to the construction of a new building from minor building works carried out in existing buildings such as installation of supporting frames for air conditioners which are simple in nature.

8. Under the new system, a new category of building works, namely “minor works”, and a register of “registered minor works contractors” (RMWCs) for carrying out such minor works, will be introduced under the BO. In respect of minor works, the requirement to seek the BA’s prior approval for building plans and consent to commence works will be dispensed with. Building professionals and RMWCs will be required to follow the new “simplified requirements”, and have to notify the BA, and submit records and certificates to the BA for carrying out minor works.

Upgrading Standard and Skills of Contractors

9. A register of RMWCs will be established. Existing minor works practitioners are required to apply for registration as RMWCs for the relevant classes, types or items of minor works as appropriate according to their qualifications and experience. RMWCs can be firms or individuals. They have to satisfy the BA that they possess the necessary qualifications and experience for conducting minor works. Some of them may have to attend top-up training courses to acquire additional skills before full registration. For the lower-skilled individuals who personally carry out Class III minor works (some are frontline practitioners), they are required to attend a mandatory training

course relating to the statutory procedures and safety requirements for Class III minor works before registration. To encourage this group of frontline workers to register, we will provide free top-up courses for the first three years from launching the registration system, and early-bird discount registration fees for the first year of registration.

10. The implementation of the minor works regime will have significant impact on building safety as under the current regime, many owners choose to ignore the statutory requirements and hire personnel without formal training to conduct minor works. Apart from being UBWs, such works are without guarantee in quality. Safety precautions may also be neglected during the construction process. With the introduction of the minor works control system, the Buildings Department (BD) will register existing practitioners as RMWCs and arrange suitable training for them before registration. The simplified procedures will also encourage compliance by building owners. The system will improve the safety standards of both the work procedures and resultant building works. The BD will conduct inspections and audit checks to ensure that the requirements are adhered to. Enforcement actions will be taken if irregularities are found.

Latest progress

11. We have already kick-started the registration of minor works contractors in late December 2009. An intensive publicity programme is being mounted to encourage minor works practitioners to register early. We aim to fully launch the minor works control system within 2010.

Mandatory Building and Window Inspection

The Schemes

12. We conducted a two-stage public consultation in 2003 and 2005, which pointed to a community consensus that owners should be responsible for keeping their buildings in good repair, including shouldering the financial commitment, and that mandatory inspection schemes should be pursued. The proposed Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) will cover private buildings aged 30 years or

above, except domestic buildings not exceeding three storeys. The BA will require building owners to carry out inspection (and repair works if necessary) in relation to the common parts, external walls and projections of the buildings once every ten years. Regarding the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS), it will cover private buildings aged ten years or above, except domestic buildings not exceeding three storeys. The BA will require building owners to carry out inspection (and repair works if necessary) in relation to windows in both common parts and individual premises of the buildings once every five years.

Assistance to Owners

13. The MBIS and MWIS will arrest the building dilapidation problem in Hong Kong in a sustainable manner in the long run. With regular inspection and repair, the building stock will remain in a healthy state and their serviceable life prolonged. Together with our partner organisations, we will provide technical and financial support to help owners in need to comply with the statutory requirements. In particular, the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) has agreed to provide subsidy to eligible building owners for the cost of first building inspection. We are also discussing with the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) how it could help provide technical and financial assistance to owners to facilitate their compliance with the Schemes. Details of our overall support and assistance measures for building maintenance and repair will be elaborated in the ensuing sections.

Handling Uncooperative Owners

14. During the public consultation conducted in 2005, there was strong support for appropriate penalties to be imposed on non-compliant cases, targeting uncooperative owners, to facilitate the compliance by other cooperative owners with the mandatory inspection requirements. In response to the public's comments, we propose that it will be an offence if an owner/occupier, without reasonable excuse, obstructs or refuses the entry of an inspector or contractor engaged by the owners' corporation (OC) or other co-owners for carrying out inspection or repair works; or if an owner, without reasonable excuse, refuses to pay the relevant share of the inspection and repair costs for the common areas.

We trust that this arrangement will deter uncooperative owners from hindering the inspection and repair works.

Scope of Inspection

15. There are views in the community recently that the scope of inspection of the MBIS should be expanded to include interior of individual flat units. The existing scope of common areas, external walls and projections reflects the consensus obtained during the two rounds of consultation. Such inspection and repair coverage significantly enhances the safety of areas that are commonly frequented by owners, occupants, building users as well as pedestrians. The current scope also strikes a balance between building safety and practicality.

Positive Recognition for Voluntary Inspection

16. While the MBIS and MWIS only apply to buildings aged 30 years or above and ten years or above respectively, owners of buildings of any age are encouraged to voluntarily carry out inspections and repair works. To give positive recognition to buildings which are properly maintained and well-managed, a Voluntary Building Classification Scheme (VBCS), to be administered by the HKHS, will be launched prior to the implementation of the two mandatory schemes. Apart from building structural safety, the VBCS will also include building management, building services, environmental protection and other value-adding elements in buildings. The building structural safety standards and requirements of the VBCS will be on par with, or higher than, those under the MBIS. Buildings with valid building safety ratings under the VBCS may be exempted from building inspections in the relevant cycles of the MBIS. The Scheme will dovetail with the MBIS and is scheduled to be launched about half a year prior to the implementation of the MBIS.

Latest progress

17. The Buildings (Amendment) Bill 2010, stipulating the statutory framework for the MBIS and MWIS, was introduced into the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 3 February 2010. A Bills Committee has been

established to scrutinise the legislation. We will work closely with Members to facilitate the scrutiny of the Bill. We hope to be able to implement the two Schemes that would significantly improve the safety of buildings in Hong Kong as early as possible.

Compulsory Land Sale for Redevelopment

18. Urban renewal is a long-term solution to tackle urban decay. While the URA will continue with its efforts to implement urban renewal projects, property owners and the private sector also play a significant role in urban redevelopment.

19. The Land (Compulsory Sale for Redevelopment) Ordinance (Cap 545) (LCSRO) came into force in 1999 to facilitate redevelopment of old and dilapidated buildings by private owners. This would in turn contribute to the overall efforts to tackle the problem of building decay and to improve the living conditions of residents living in dilapidated buildings. Under the LCSRO, persons who own not less than 90% of a lot may make an application to the Lands Tribunal for an order for the sale of the lot for redevelopment. The Lands Tribunal will make such an order if it is satisfied that redevelopment is justified due to the age or state of repair of the existing development on the lot and that reasonable steps have been taken by the applicant to acquire all the undivided shares in the lot.

20. After extensive consultation, we have laid the Land (Compulsory Sale for Redevelopment) (Specification of Lower Percentage) Notice before LegCo, which aims to lower the threshold for an application to be made to the Lands Tribunal for compulsory sale from ownership of not less than 90% to not less than 80% of the undivided shares in respect of the following three classes of lot –

- (a) a lot with units each of which accounts for more than 10% of the undivided shares in the lot;
- (b) a lot with all buildings aged 50 years or above; and
- (c) a lot with all industrial buildings aged 30 years or above not located within an industrial zone.

21. The first class of lot is included to address deadlock situations whereby even with the agreement of all owners but one in the lot, the agreeing owner(s) still fail(s) to reach the 90% application threshold and hence cannot make an application to the Lands Tribunal for an order to sell for the purposes of redevelopment if the one remaining un-acquired unit accounts for more than 10% of the undivided shares of the lot.

22. The design working life of an ordinary building in Hong Kong is about 50 years. We have included the second class of lot with all buildings aged 50 years or above in the Notice to enhance the ability of private property owners of some of these buildings to address the issue of building dilapidation through redevelopment and to improve the living condition of the affected residents.

23. The lowering of the compulsory sale application threshold for the redevelopment of industrial buildings of 30 years of age was one of the measures announced by the Chief Executive in the 2009-10 Policy Address to facilitate the revitalisation of industrial buildings in Hong Kong. The measure for the third class of lots above will help optimise the use of under-utilised or disused industrial buildings located in non-industrial zones in Hong Kong.

(B) Enforcement

Government's Enforcement Efforts

24. The Government has devoted significant resources and effort in taking inspection and enforcement actions to enhance building safety in Hong Kong. In particular, as UBWs were rampant in the late 1990s, we focused our action on tackling the problem and, starting 2001, conducted two five-year special programmes to demolish unauthorised works. In summary, from 2001 to 2009, with the BD's yearly large scale clearance operations, nearly 12,000 buildings have been covered, with around 380,000 UBWs removed. Indeed, the BD has been able to achieve most of the targets set early. It is expected that by the end of the ten-year programme in March 2011, more than 400,000 UBWs would have been removed. We are confident that the problem of UBWs in Hong Kong has been significantly alleviated and most of the high-risk UBWs in Hong

Kong have been removed. Apart from demolition of UBWs, the BD has also been conducting various programmes, such as the Comprehensive Maintenance of Buildings Scheme, to require owners repair their buildings in a comprehensive manner. Statistics of the BD's various enforcement actions are summarised in Annex A.

Special Operations

25. The BD has launched special operations from time to time in response to the development needs of the community. For instance, in March 2009, the BD embarked on a 12-month special operation to remove 5,000 abandoned signboards on top of the Department's annual action. Nominations from District Councils and Fire Safety Ambassadors on locations of abandoned signboards over the 18 districts have been received. Up to early February 2010, over 5,200 abandoned signboards (more than the original target) had been removed under the special operation.

26. Immediately after the building collapse incident in Ma Tau Wai Road on 29 January 2010, the BD embarked on an urgent programme starting from 1 February 2010 to inspect some 4 000 buildings constructed in or before 1960 in Hong Kong. The objective is to ascertain the conditions of the buildings aged 50 years or above. The inspection is on schedule, and buildings that require repairs are issued with repair orders or advisory letters depending on the severity of the problems identified. Up to 17 February 2010, 2,463 buildings had been inspected. So far, one required the carrying out of immediate repair works by the BD, and about 576 required the issuance of repair or investigation orders. We will consider enlisting buildings that require repair works but are without organising power as target buildings under the Operation Building Bright (OBB). If necessary, the BD will conduct such works on behalf of the owners and then charge the cost after deducting the grants that the owners are eligible for under the Operation.

Future Direction

27. Our past enforcement efforts were mostly focused on the then most serious problem which was UBWs. Upon completion of the ten year enforcement programme, in order to dovetail with the proposed new legislative regime, in particular the MBIS and MWIS which encourage preventive maintenance, we will shift our focus and devote our enforcement efforts to foster timely maintenance and repair. The proposed legislation for the two mandatory schemes will enable the BD to require owners to conduct regular inspections. Under the existing BO, the BD may also issue repair orders to require owners to rectify any irregularities in their properties that may cause danger. The BD will step up inspections and enforcement, focusing on repair and maintenance requirements, with a view to improving the overall safety condition of buildings in Hong Kong. There are views that a tougher stance should be taken against non-compliant owners to create a stronger deterrent effect. The Department will instigate more prosecution actions as appropriate to sanction owners who do not duly observe the statutory orders to protect building safety. For buildings lacking management and owners of which could not coordinate the repair works by themselves, the BD will consider carrying out the repair works on behalf of owners and then charge them at a later stage. Nevertheless, we have to emphasise that this approach is not a sustainable solution in the long run and it should only be used under special circumstances. Building owners do have the responsibility to properly maintain their properties and should not be allowed to rely on the Government to fulfill their duties.

28. Under the existing BO, officers of the BD have power to enter into individual units to carry out inspections so as to ascertain the condition of the premises. Officers of the BD will utilise this power if required. If it is suspected from the inspection of common areas that there may be irregularities within individual units, the officers will seek to enter into such units to conduct further inspections.

(C) Support and Assistance

29. We are mindful that some building owners may not possess adequate knowledge or financial ability to carry out the necessary

maintenance and repair works for their properties. In fact, we believe that a prerequisite for the successful implementation of our various programmes is the availability of effective support and assistance measures for owners in need. On this, the Government and our partner organisations have a full range of technical and financial support measures to cater for the needs of different OCs and building owners. The major ones are highlighted below -

"Operation Building Bright"

30. As a specific measure for "Preserving Jobs" amidst the 2008 financial tsunami, the Government, in collaboration with the HKHS and URA, launched in May 2009 the \$2-billion "Operation Building Bright" (OBB) to provide subsidies and one-stop technical assistance to help owners of old and dilapidated buildings to carry out repair and maintenance works. To cater for the needs of buildings and owners under different situations, the OBB has been tailored to covers two categories of buildings -

- (a) Category 1 target buildings cover buildings with OCs established. They may apply for joining the OBB to carry out repair works on a voluntary basis; and
- (b) Category 2 target buildings are buildings having difficulties in co-ordinating repair works, such as buildings without OCs. If the owners of the buildings are unwilling or unable to conduct repair works by themselves, the BD will carry out the repair works on behalf of the owners. After deducting the amount of subsidies available under the OBB, the BD will take action to recover the remaining repair costs from the owners.

31. As at 2 February 2010, 1,016 Category 1 and 615 Category 2 target buildings have been included in the OBB. Based on our estimation so far, after completion of the works in respect of all the eligible buildings, there will still be some uncommitted funds available for further deployment. We will be using part of it on those of the 4,000 buildings aged 50 or above covered in the BD's current special inspection exercise as necessary and will consider how best to make use of the

remaining funds to assist more buildings. Our intention is to make full use of the \$2 billion to aid as many buildings as possible.

32. We believe that with the experience gained in the OBB, OCs and building owners will be better equipped to handle building maintenance and repair works in the future. Buildings that have participated in the OBB will have their building safety conditions improved and hence the need for substantive repair works in the near future would be minimised.

“Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners”

33. In the past, the lack of financial capability of elderly owner-occupiers had hampered the repair and maintenance works of their self-occupied premises, rendering such premises dilapidated and unsafe for occupants and users. Whilst there existed a variety of assistance schemes providing financial assistance to various degrees, they were not tailor-made for elderly owner-occupiers and were unable to directly address these owners' needs.

34. In line with the Government's care for the elderly policy objective, the Government established the \$1-billion Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners (BMGSEO) to enhance financial assistance to elderly owner-occupiers to repair and maintain their self-occupied properties. The Scheme caters for elderly owner-occupiers (aged 60 or above) who have a low income and modest assets. Each elderly owner-occupier will be eligible for a maximum grant of \$40,000 within a period of five years. Apart from general repair works at the common areas, the grant also covers works in individual premises, including repair of spalled concrete, fixing of water pipes, repair and replacement of windows, etc. The BMGSEO also allows eligible elderly owner-occupiers who have default repayments, or who are still making regular repayments, to repay their outstanding or default loans administered by the BD, HKHS or URA. These elderly owner-occupiers had immediately benefitted from the Scheme upon its launch.

35. The BMGSEO will continue to be a major means to assist elderly owner-occupiers in need to maintain and repair their buildings, in particular for their compliance with the MBIS and MWIS in future.

Other Financial Assistance Schemes

36. Further financial assistance schemes administered by the Government, HKHS and URA are also available to help building owners in need. They include the BD's Comprehensive Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme (which may provide interest-free loans to eligible owners), HKHS' Building Management and Maintenance Scheme as well as URA's Building Rehabilitation Materials Incentive Scheme and Building Rehabilitation Loan Scheme. They are tailor made to cover the different needs of owners and buildings for various types of maintenance and repair works. Statistics of the various Government financial assistance schemes are at Annex B. We are discussing with HKHS and URA on how to better coordinate the interface among these assistance schemes to make them more user-friendly.

Technical Assistance

Tripartite Collaboration to Assist Owners

37. Through the implementation of the OBB, the BD, HKHS and URA have further consolidated their partnership in promoting building safety. With BD focusing on its statutory role to take enforcement actions, and HKHS and URA on the provision of practical advice and technical support, the three organisations have created much synergy in taking forward their shared goal of improving building safety in Hong Kong. We will continue to nurture such modus operandi so developed and utilise the same in pursuing the Government's future policy initiatives to enhance building safety, in particular in the implementation of the MBIS and MWIS.

Building Management

38. Proper maintenance of buildings is closely related to good building management. Active participation of building owners and the presence of a coordination body, such as an OC, mutual aid committee or property management company, are paramount to the smooth execution of building maintenance and repair works. Such a coordination body plays a pivotal role in assisting owners in coordinating meetings, inviting tenders, formulating the scope of repair and maintenance budget, resolving day-to-day issues during the execution of repair works, etc. The promulgation of clear maintenance guidelines and the provision of one-stop technical support by a supporting organisation, such as the HKHS and URA, will also complement the owners' efforts in pursuing the repair works, especially for those owners and OCs with little prior knowledge or experience in coordinating large-scale building maintenance works.

39. We will work closely with the Home Affairs Bureau as well as the HKHS and URA to map out measures to help owners to more effectively manage their buildings.

On-line Access of Building Plans

40. To facilitate interested building owners and occupants as well as building professionals and contractors to access and inspect approved building plans more easily, the BD launched in September 2009 the Building Records Access & Viewing Online (BRAVO) system. The information stored in the BRAVO system includes 2 million approved plans and 23.5 million related documents. The new system offers round-the-clock service which allows users to view building records through the Internet anytime and anywhere. It will save time and the cost of travelling to the BD's Information Centre, which offers viewing service of physical copies of building plans.

(D) Publicity and Public Education

41. The Ma Tau Wai building collapse incident has revealed that the building safety awareness of the general public is still weak. Our long

term objective is to foster a building safety culture in Hong Kong, so that all stakeholders involved (building owners, occupants, building professionals, contractors and workers) will possess the self-awareness to properly observe building safety. A safe built environment can only be sustained if all concerned in our community responsibly play their part.

Building Owner as Major Stakeholder

42. Maintaining building safety is the ultimate responsibility of building owners. This will be the main message that we will drive home in our future public education programmes. We will put emphasis on owners' responsibility and merits of timely maintenance, risk from unsafe building works and liability from constructing/retaining UBWs. The following themes will be covered in our future publicity programme -

- (a) Proper building maintenance and management will extend the life span and enhance the value of properties;
- (b) Owners may have to bear severe legal consequences because of negligence (e.g. heavy compensation responsibility for accidents causing casualties). Illegal alterations of structural elements of buildings and construction of UBWs can lead to deadly incidents;
- (c) Owners should take statutory orders seriously and take immediate follow-up actions, otherwise they will be prosecuted and sanctioned by the authorities;
- (d) Owners should have the basic understanding of the statutory regime and the new minor works control system, and know how they can engage qualified personnel to conduct building works legally;
- (e) Owners should organise themselves to manage and maintain their buildings; and
- (f) Occupants should choose rental flats carefully and avoid premises that are unsafe (e.g. units with a large no. of unauthorized alterations).

43. We will also consider the production of a simple layman's guide to educate owners and occupants on how to keep an eye on the conditions of their buildings and when they should consult professionals for safety

inspections and repair.

Building Professionals and Industry

44. Building professionals and members of the industry are the stakeholders who give owners professional advice on building maintenance and repair matter and carry out works on behalf of owners. They are also key players in sustaining building safety. For this group of stakeholders, we will focus on the following key messages in our publicity -

- (a) All personnel involved in building works must not carry out unauthorised building repair works, including in particular those affecting structural elements of buildings, even if requested by building owners;
- (b) Contractors and workers should not conduct building works that they have not registered for or are not conversant with. They should be aware that the consequence for carrying out substandard building works can be severe;
- (c) All necessary safety procedures should be followed and precautions taken when carrying out building works (e.g. special precautions should be taken when handling works involving asbestos); and
- (d) caretakers/security guards should be on alert and report to the BD illegal alteration works.

Public Education Campaign

45. We will mount a large-scale public education campaign with a view to fostering a building safety culture in Hong Kong. To instill the aforementioned messages in the various stakeholders' minds, apart from the traditional publicity avenues such as TV advertisements and posters, tailor-made promotional tactics will be developed. For example, the safety concepts of carrying out building works will be included in the syllabus of the top-up training courses for individual Class III minor works practitioners. For building management practices and related legal issues, the BD, HKHS and URA will explain to OCs and building owners through their direct contacts with them in running their respective

building safety programmes as well as the implementation of OBB. To instill a stronger sense of appreciation of the importance of building safety amongst our younger population, we will pursue the idea of incorporating building safety into the liberal studies curriculum of school education by producing teaching kits as appropriate. Our publicity campaign will continue to evolve, and we will continue to explore new methods to effectively disseminate building safety messages to all stakeholders.

ADVICE SOUGHT

46. Members are invited to note and comment on our package of measures to enhance building safety and offer suggestions.

Development Bureau
February 2010

Statistics of Enforcement Actions and Other Programmes by Buildings Department and Other Departments

1. Number of Buildings under “Large-scale Clearance Operation” by Buildings Department

The “Large-scale Clearance Operation” mainly aims to clear unauthorised building works on external walls of buildings and repair building defects.

Year	Number of Buildings
2001	1,571
2002	1,759
2003	1,007
2004	1,027
2005	1,000
2006	1,169
2007	1,514
2008	1,579
2009	1,202
Total	11,828

2. Number of Unauthorized Building Works Removed

Year	Number
2001	20,647
2002	37,923
2003	49,556
2004	41,210
2005	40,365
2006	48,479
2007	51,312
2008	47,593
2009	42,425
Total	379,510

3. Number of Buildings under “Comprehensive Building Maintenance Scheme” Jointly Undertaken by Various Departments

The Buildings Department, in association with six other Government departments, namely the Home Affairs Department, Fire Services Department, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Water Supplies Department and Environmental Protection Department, conducts the “Coordinated Maintenance of Buildings Scheme” in various districts throughout Hong Kong. The purpose of the Scheme is to assist building owners and owners’ corporations in resolving building management and maintenance problems. Starting from 2005, the Buildings Department has also invited the Hong Kong Housing Society to provide free advice to the participating owners. The departments will assist owners and owners’ corporations to pursue the required building improvement works of various aspects and, where necessary, initiate joint enforcement actions.

Year	Number of Buildings
2001	150
2002	200
2003	200
2004	_ Note 1
2005	150
2006	153
2007	150
2008	150
2009	150
Total	1,303

Note 1 No Scheme was conducted in 2004 as the concerned departments were reviewing the Scheme.

4. Number of Single-staircase Buildings with Illegal Rooftop Structures Removed

Year	Number of Buildings
2001	402
2002	632
2003	713
2004	714
2005	705
2006	704
2007	707
2008	632
2009	130 ^{Note 2}
Total	5,339

Note 2 The number of buildings in 2009 is less than those in previous years, because the Buildings Department's programme to clear illegal rooftop structures in 5,500 single-staircase buildings is approaching completion. The Buildings Department will continue to clear illegal rooftop structures in the remaining single-staircase buildings.

5. Number of Signboards on External Walls of Buildings Removed

Year	Number
2001	1,491
2002	1,917
2003	1,375
2004	1,496
2005	1,597
2006	1,690
2007	2,428 ^{Note 3}
2008	1,881
2009	6,470 ^{Note 4}
Total	20,345

Note 3 The Buildings Department and Home Affairs Department in collaboration launched a special operation to remove abandoned signboards during January to July 2007. Therefore the number of signboards removed in 2007 was more than those in previous years.

Note 4 The Buildings Department launched a 12-month special operation in March 2009 to remove about 5,000 abandoned signboards. Therefore the number of signboards removed in 2009 was more than those in previous years.

6. Number of Removal Orders Issued by Buildings Department

Year	Number
2001	13,212
2002	54,010
2003	24,003
2004	27,805
2005	25,007
2006	32,711
2007	32,898
2008	32,847
2009	31,453
Total	273,946

7. Number of Prosecution Cases for Non-Compliant with Removal Orders Instigated by Buildings Department

Year	Number of Prosecution Cases
2001	392
2002	466
2003	684
2004	1,664
2005	2,962
2006	3,042
2007	3,021
2008	3,091
2009	3,063
Total	18,385

8. Number of Repair Orders Issued by Buildings Department

Year	Number
2001	295
2002	671
2003	2,676 ^{Note 5}
2004	1,593
2005	901
2006	1,041
2007	1,083
2008	927
2009	1,143 ^{Note 6}
Total	10,330

Note 5 According to the “Team Clean” ’s recommended measures, the Buildings Department enhanced its inspection work on drainage pipes on external walls of buildings in 2003, leading to the increase in the number of repair orders issued in that year.

Note 6 The “Operation Building Bright”, launched in mid-2009, led to the increase in the number of repair orders issued in that year.

9. Number of Buildings Repaired after Receiving Buildings Department's Repair Orders

Year	Number of Buildings
2001	390
2002	517
2003	667
2004	2,194 ^{Note 7}
2005	1,581
2006	1,039
2007	1,211
2008	1,060
2009	1,082
Total	9,741

Note 7 According to the "Team Clean"'s recommended measures, as the number of repair orders issued by the Buildings Department in 2003 increased, the number of buildings repaired in 2004 increased.

10. Number of Warning Notices Issued by Buildings Department

Year	Number
2001	–
2002	–
2003	–
2004	–
2005	2,184 ^{Note 8}
2006	8,498
2007	8,621
2008	8,272
2009	7,638
Total	35,213

Note 8 The Buildings Department only started to issue warning notices in accordance with the then newly amended legislation in 2005. Therefore, the figure cannot reflect a full-year situation.

Statistics of Various Government Support Measures

**1. Comprehensive Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme
(administered by Buildings Department)**

(as at 17 February 2010)

Number of applications	21,571
Number of applications approved	19,087
Number of applications being processed	369
Amount of loans approved	About \$600 million
Amount of loans released	About \$450 million

**2. Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners
(administered by Hong Kong Housing Society)**

(as at 17 February 2010)

Number of applications	6,609
Number of applications approved in principle	5,080
Amount of grants released or to be released	About \$180 million

3. Operation Building Bright (jointly operated by Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS), Urban Renewal Authority (URA) and Buildings Department (BD))

(as at 2 February 2010)

Number of Target Buildings and Progress of Operation:

	HKHS	URA	BD	Total
Category 1 Target Buildings				
(a) Number of eligible buildings	618	398	-	1,016
(b) Number of buildings approved in principle	601	386	-	987
(c) Number of buildings undergoing repair works	38	28	-	66
(d) Number of buildings with repair works completed	4	2	-	6
Category 2 Target Buildings				
(e) Number of buildings confirmed as target buildings (by Steering Committee)	615			615
(f) Number of buildings undergoing repair works	8	9	91	108
(g) Number of buildings with repair works completed	4	0	40	44
Statistics combining Categories 1 and 2 Target Buildings				
(h) Total number of target buildings [(a)+(e)]				1,631
(i) Total number of target buildings undergoing repair works [(c)+(f)]				174
(j) Total number of target buildings with repair works completed [(d)+(g)]				50

**4. Statistics of Target Buildings by District under Operation
Building Bright**

(as at 2 February 2010)

District Council District	Number of Category 1 Target Buildings	Number of Category 2 Target Buildings	Total
Central and Western	97	68	165
Wan Chai	78	23	101
Southern	16	4	20
Eastern	100	29	129
Kwun Tong	67	23	90
Sham Shui Po	117	136	253
Yau Tsim Mong	270	89	359
Wong Tai Sin	21	2	23
Kowloon City	95	162	257
Islands	0	0	0
Tsuen Wan	44	57	101
Yuen Long	40	5	45
North	3	8	11
Shatin	3	1	4
Sai Kung	0	0	0
Kwai Tsing	39	3	42
Tai Po	18	4	22
Tuen Mun	8	1	9
Total	1,016	615	1,631