

**The Administration's Response on  
Unauthorised Conversion of Industrial Buildings into Residences**

A submission of 11 November 2010 on the above issue from the Chairman of the Housing and Building Management Committee of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council has been referred to the Development Bureau for follow up action. The response of the Administration is as follows.

(a) Fire Safety

The illegal conversion of industrial buildings into domestic units would expose the occupiers to potential fire hazards. Therefore, upon receipt of such complaints, Fire Services Department (FSD) will arrange inspection to the concerned buildings. All the means of escape will be inspected to ensure the escape routes are free from obstruction, and the fire service installations and equipment will be checked to ensure that they are maintained in efficient working order. FSD will take enforcement actions immediately against any contravention of the Fire Services Ordinance (Cap. 95) or the Dangerous Goods Ordinance (Cap. 295) due to over-storage of dangerous goods. Furthermore, FSD will refer other irregularities (e.g. Unauthorized Building Works) to the relevant enforcement authorities for follow-up actions.

(b) Building Safety

As regards the work of the Buildings Department (BD), generally speaking, the loading of the floor of a residence is smaller than that of a factory. Hence, converting an industrial building into a residence generally will not affect the structural safety of a building. As for illegal building works related to conversion of an industrial building into residences, examples include alterations or removal of structural parts of building (such as structural walls or beams and columns), and making of openings on fire resistant partition walls to serve as doorways leading to contravention of the requirements of fire escape or fire resistance constructions, etc. To ensure public safety, the BD, in addition to following the established policies to tackle various types of unauthorised building works, is currently carrying out large scale operations against unauthorised building works including those in industrial buildings as one of the

targets.

As regards enforcement, section 22 of the Buildings Ordinance empowers officers of the BD to enter into individual premises and, in the presence of police officers, break into premises to inspect their safety conditions. In addition, the Government is considering introducing legislative amendments to provide for application to the Court for warrants under the Buildings Ordinance to enter into individual premises to facilitate BD's enforcement work.

Development Bureau

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