

# Application for flats under Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme to close tomorrow

Application for flats under the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme Flats 2018 (GSH 2018) will close tomorrow (January 10). The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has so far received about 23 000 applications.

A spokesman for the HA reminded eligible applicants to submit applications before the deadline.

The spokesman particularly reminded all valid Home Ownership Scheme 2018 (HOS 2018) Green Form (GF) applicants to return the reply slips and declaration forms to confirm their applications for GSH 2018 before the deadline.

To pilot the streamlined application procedures, from mid-December last year to early January this year, the HA sent a one-off notification letter and two SMS messages to individual valid GF applicants of HOS 2018 requesting them to confirm their application for GSH 2018. They were requested to complete and return through the estate management offices or tenancy management offices concerned both the reply slip and the declaration form enclosed in the notification letter to indicate their consent:

- (1) to carry over their HOS 2018 applications to GSH 2018;
- (2) to allow the HA and the Housing Department to use their personal information on HOS 2018 application forms for the processing of GSH 2018 applications; and
- (3) to return their existing public housing units upon successful purchase of GSH flats and to abide by other application requirements.

"Applicants returning the reply slips and declaration forms indicating their agreement to carry over their applications to GSH 2018 are not required to submit application for GSH 2018. Applicants who need to change their family composition or change the applicant have to submit new applications," the spokesman reiterated.

The HA will review the operational experience and consider scope for further streamlining with a view to facilitating application for HOS and GSH flats in 2019.

For applicants who do not return the reply slip and the declaration form to the HA on or before January 10, the HA will assume that they do not agree to carry over their applications from HOS 2018 to GSH 2018. However, such arrangement will not affect their applications under HOS 2018.

The HA has so far received about 23 000 applications, comprising about 17 000 from the GF applicants of HOS 2018 as well as about 6,000 new

applications. These applicants will receive an acknowledgement letter together with their GSH 2018 application number later. All the received applications will be included in the same open balloting exercise, which is expected to take place around the end of February this year.

Since the majority of the GF applicants are public rental housing households, they are required to submit their applications as well as the above-mentioned reply slips through the estate management offices or tenancy management offices concerned for verification and onward submission to the GSH Sales Unit for further processing. As such, the latest figures on the number of applications received will be duly announced after the application deadline and receiving all the applications from the estate offices.

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## **Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident**

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about a fatal work accident that happened in Diamond Hill this morning (January 9), in which a male worker fell from a bamboo truss-out scaffold on the external wall of a residential building and sustained fatal injuries. The LD is saddened by the death of the worker and has expressed its deepest sympathy to the victim's family.

The LD's spokesman said, "We commenced immediate on-site investigation as soon as we were notified of the accident and issued suspension notices to the contractors and employer involved to suspend the use, erection, alteration and dismantling of the truss-out scaffolds concerned. The contractors and employer cannot resume the work process until the LD is satisfied that measures to abate the relevant risk have been taken.

"We will complete investigation as soon as possible to identify the cause of the accident, ascertain the liability of the duty holders and recommend improvement measures. We will take actions pursuant to the law if there is any violation of the work safety legislation."

The general duty provisions of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance require employers to provide safe working environments, safe plant and safe systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the above provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for six months.

In regard to today's accident, the LD will issue a Work Safety Alert through its website and email, giving a brief account of the accident concerned to duty holders, workers' unions, professional bodies of safety practitioners and others, and reminding the industry of the importance of

following safety precautionary measures to prevent recurrence of similar accidents.

The LD will also remind the employer concerned of the liability for employees' compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, assist family members of the deceased to claim employees' compensation and closely follow up on the case. For those with financial difficulties, the LD will assist them to apply for appropriate emergency funds. Subject to the needs and wishes of family members of the deceased, the LD will also liaise with the Social Welfare Department for financial or other assistance.

For the sake of securing the safety and health of employees at work, the LD appeals to employers to provide plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and use personal protective equipment provided properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.

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## **LCQ13: Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme**

Following is a question by Hon Ma Fung-kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (January 9):

Question:

Since the last school year, the Education Bureau and the Home Affairs Bureau have jointly launched the Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme (the Scheme). Through providing financial incentives, the Scheme encourages schools to hire out their facilities to sports organisations. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the details, as set out in the table below, of the programmes which were held/have been confirmed to be held under the Scheme (i) in the last school year and (ii) in the current school year (set out separately in tables of the same format as the table below);

School year: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of sports organisation	Name of school (District)	Number of programmes	Type of sports	School facilities hired	Number of participants
Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:

(2) as the authorities indicated that they would collect views on the Scheme from the schools and sports organisations concerned after the end of the last school year, of the views so collected; the enhancement measures taken by the authorities in the light of such views; whether these measures include (i) further encouraging sports organisations and schools to participate in the Scheme, and (ii) enhancing the matching between sports organisations and schools; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as some sports organisations have relayed that the levels of the hire charges for school facilities levied by some schools are higher than the relevant levels of charges for the facilities under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, whether the authorities will (i) encourage such schools to lower their hire charges and (ii) provide subsidies to sports organisations for hiring school facilities; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) whether the authorities will expand the lists of sports organisations eligible for participating in the Scheme; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) given that sports organisations participating in the Scheme are required to take out, on their own, insurance with adequate coverage (including third party risks insurance) for the programmes to be held by them in schools, whether the authorities will consider collectively purchasing the required insurance for such sports organisations so as to boost the incentives for sports organisations to participate in the Scheme; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Since its launch in the 2017/18 school year, the Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme (the Scheme) has been well received by the sports sector and schools. In consultation with the Education Bureau (EDB), the consolidated reply to the questions raised by the Hon Ma Fung-kwok is as follows:

(1) The details of the programmes organised under the Scheme in the 2017/18 and 2018/19 school years are at Annex.

(2) According to the respective questionnaire surveys conducted by EDB and the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB), the feedback of participating schools and eligible sports organisations of the Scheme in its first year of operation

was positive.

Participating schools were of the view that the Scheme could strengthen their community connection, enable the community to make effective use of schools' facilities and collaborate in the development of sports, provide more opportunities for students to participate in physical activities, and enhance the sporting culture on campus. On the other hand, they also suggest that the Government should step up promotion of the Scheme and increase the number of eligible sports organisations so that more students and sports organisations could be benefited.

Sports organisations generally considered that the Scheme could provide a wider range of sports venues, facilitate promotion of their respective sports and reaching out to target participants, help build partnerships with schools, as well as contribute to the promotion of sports in the community.

Having regard to the feedback collected, we have implemented a number of improvement measures in the 2018/19 school year, which include:

- increasing the amount of subsidy for schools from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for the first programme, and from \$15,000 to \$20,000 for each subsequent programme. The cap of the subsidy is also raised from \$80,000 to \$130,000 for each school per school year;
- extending the Scheme to the 72 schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme;
- increasing the number of eligible sports organisations from 81 to 117;
- encouraging participating schools to charge sports organisations at the reduced rates specified in the guidelines issued by EDB; and
- arranging briefing sessions for school representatives and sports organisations.

For the 2018/19 school year, among some 130 schools which indicated willingness to open up their facilities under the Scheme, 31 schools have confirmed opening up their facilities to 25 sports organisations for around 180 squad and young athletes training and district sports activities. In the 2017/18 school year, 12 schools opened up their facilities to 15 sports organisations for running 38 sports programmes in total, which demonstrates a significantly higher participation of the Scheme in its second year.

(3) The daily operational expenses of public sector schools are mainly subsidised by the Government. EDB has through the years been issuing guidelines to public sector schools to set out the recommended charges for the hiring of accommodations in schools. Generally speaking, schools should charge hirers on a full-cost recovery basis. Since the operation, target groups, management policies and funding sources of schools and leisure facilities under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) are entirely different, their levels of charges are not directly comparable.

Nonetheless, to encourage more sports organisations to join the Scheme, EDB has in September 2018 updated the "Guidelines for Levying Charges for Hire of Accommodation in Schools" for public sector schools, and incorporated eligible sports organisations under the Scheme into the category of organisations eligible for reduced rates. The discount rates range from 48

per cent to 86 per cent depending on the types of facilities hired. According to the information provided by schools participating in the Scheme in the 2018/19 school year, around 90 per cent of them have adopted the reduced rates or even lower fees when charging sports organisations. Some schools even took the initiatives to waive the charges altogether.

Currently, most of the eligible sports organisations are receiving subvention from LCSD or the Home Affairs Department, which covers expenses associated with training, purchase of equipment and rental of sports venues.

We consider the present reduced rates adopted by schools under the Scheme are at an affordable level for these eligible sports organisations. Therefore, we have no plan to provide additional subsidy for them.

(4) Given some schools and parents concern that opening up school facilities may bring security and operational issues, and that some places of the sports programmes are also reserved for students, the Scheme is currently opened for "national sports associations" recognised by the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China and their affiliated club members, district sports associations and sports organisations subvented by LCSD. These organisations are experienced with proven track record in organising sports programmes, so that the participating schools, students and parents could have more confidence in them. If other organisations are interested in hiring school facilities to organise sports programmes, they may collaborate with eligible sports organisations to join the Scheme.

EDB and HAB will continue to enhance the Scheme and take into account schools' feedback in considering whether to further expand the list of sports organisations so that more school facilities can be used for sports activities.

(5) To provide schools with appropriate coverage, EDB has taken out Block Insurance Policy (BIP) for aided schools and caput schools, which currently covers their public liability as the occupier and/or landlord and/or property owner. If a school hires out school premises/facilities to outside organisations for holding activities and a user gets injured due to the use of facilities during the hiring period, it is covered by the Public Liability Insurance section of the BIP provided that the injury is caused by the negligence of the school. However, the legal liability of outside organisations for accidents caused by their oversight when holding activities in schools falls outside the scope of the BIP.

Participating sports organisations of the Scheme are required to take out adequate insurance policy for the use of school facilities, including third party liability insurance, and include the school as the insured as appropriate to ensure adequate protection for staff, property and facilities in the school premises. Given the scale, type of sports, risks involved and number of participants of the programmes vary, and that the facilities hired are also different, it is more prudent and practical for sports organisations to procure suitable insurance separately having regard to the nature of the programmes organised.

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## LCQ12: Assistance provided to small and medium enterprises

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Chun-ying and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, in the Legislative Council today (January 9):

Question:

To relieve the impacts of the Sino-United States trade conflicts on the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) of Hong Kong, the Government has put in place a number of measures since the middle of last year. Such measures include the three enhancement measures for the 80 per cent Guarantee Product under the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme (the Scheme) introduced by the HKMC Insurance Limited in November last year, namely, (i) increasing the maximum loan amount to HK\$15 million, (ii) reducing the guarantee fee by 50 per cent, and (iii) lengthening the maximum loan guarantee period to seven years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether the number of applications received under the Scheme, and the total amount of loans involved in those applications, have increased since the introduction of the aforesaid enhancement measures; whether it has assessed if the effectiveness of such measures meets the expectations; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the negative, of the reasons for that, and the specific improvement measures in place;

(2) given that the Scheme stipulates that "the loans must be used for providing general working capital for the enterprises' business operations, acquisition of equipment or assets in relation to the enterprises' business or refinancing any facilities with a guarantee issued under the Scheme", of a breakdown by usage of the amount of the loans approved under the Scheme since November last year and their respective percentages in the total loan amount; whether it has studied SMEs' demand for capital as reflected by these figures; if so, of the outcome; and

(3) notwithstanding that China and the United States have restarted a three-month negotiation on their trade conflicts since early last month, there are comments that the trade conflicts are unlikely to be fully resolved in the short run, whether the Government has any medium and long term solutions to improve the business environment of SMEs (e.g. lowering various kinds of government fees and charges, reducing taxes, and attracting more tourists to Hong Kong so as to stimulate domestic consumption and sustain economic growth)?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to the three parts of the question is as follow:

(1) The HKMC Insurance Limited (HKMCI) implemented several enhancements to the special concessionary measures under the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme (SFGS) (i.e. the 80 per cent guarantee product) on November 19, 2018, including reducing the guarantee fee rates by 50 per cent; increasing the maximum loan amount from \$12 million to \$15 million; and lengthening the maximum loan guarantee period from five years to seven years. The enhancements would last till June 30, 2019. The Government has also extended the application period of the special concessionary measures to June 30, 2019.

Since the launch of the enhancement measures, there has been a marked increase in the number of applications received and the amount of loan involved for the 80 per cent guarantee product.

The number of applications approved in December 2018 and the amount of loan involved have increased month-on-month by 31 per cent and 40 per cent respectively, and year-on-year by 46 per cent and 53 per cent respectively (see the table below for details).

	November 2018	December 2018	Increase
Number of applications approved	131	172	+31%
Amount of loan involved in approved applications (\$)	540 million	757 million	+40%

	December 2017	December 2018	Increase
Number of applications approved	118	172	+46%
Amount of loan involved in approved applications (\$)	496 million	757 million	+53%

As seen from the number of approved applications in the above tables, enterprises reacted favourably to the enhancement measures, reflecting the effectiveness of the new measures in assisting enterprises in obtaining financing. The HKMCI will continue to maintain dialogue with business chambers and associations as well as participating lenders, and endeavour to reduce the financing burden of local enterprises and assist enterprises in obtaining financing through the SFGS.



(2) As shown from the applications approved under the special concessionary measures under the SFGS from November to end-December of last year, the loans applied are mainly for providing general working capital for enterprises' business operations. Details can be found in the table below:

Use of loan (can be more than one)	Number of applications approved (Amount of loan involved in \$)			Percentage of individual use to total
	November 2018	December 2018	Total	
1. Providing general working capital for the enterprises' business operations	118 (471 million)	165 (710 million)	283 (1.181 billion)	93.4% (91.1%)
2. Refinancing existing loan(s)/facility(ies) guaranteed under the SFGS	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0% (0%)
3. Providing general working capital for the enterprises' business operations and refinancing existing loan(s)/facility(ies) guaranteed under the SFGS	13 (69 million)	7 (47 million)	20 (116 million)	6.6% (8.9%)
4. Acquisition of equipment or assets to facilitate business operations of the enterprises	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0% (0%)
Total	131 (540 million)	172 (757 million)	303 (1.297 billion)	100% (100%)

From the accumulated number of applications approved under the special concessionary measures under the SFGS since its launch to the end of last year, it is noted that the use of loan is also mainly to provide general working capital for enterprises' business operations. Details can be found in the table below:

(As at end-December 2018)

Use of loan (can be more than one)	Number of applications approved	Percentage of individual use to total
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1. Providing general working capital for the enterprises' business operations	13 557	93.1%
2. Refinancing existing loan(s) / facility(ies) guaranteed under the SFGS	29	0.2%
3. Providing general working capital for the enterprises' business operations and refinancing existing loan(s) / facility(ies) guaranteed under the SFGS	950	6.5%
4. Acquisition of equipment or assets to facilitate business operations of the enterprises	22	0.2%
Total	14 558	100%

(3) The Government has been closely monitoring developments of the China-US trade conflict and their impact on Hong Kong economy, maintaining close communication and exchanging information with the trade, and discussing with them how to respond. The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and the Trade and Industry Department (TID) have met with major local chambers and associations of SMEs many times to gauge their views. TID has also set up a dedicated liaison platform for better communication with and dissemination of information to the trade. Apart from the enhancements to the SFGS as mentioned above, the Government has introduced a number of support measures last year, including:

(i) The Hong Kong Export Credit Insurance Corporation has introduced in phases special enhanced measures to strengthen protection for Hong Kong exporters affected by the US tariff measures, including providing six free buyer credit assessments for each Hong Kong exporter; providing 30 per cent discount on premium for "Small Business Policy" (SBP) holders (i.e. Hong Kong exporters with annual sales turnover less than \$50 million); increasing the credit limit on US buyers for SBP holders by 20 per cent to a maximum of \$5 million; and providing free pre-shipment cover for SBP holders affected by the US tariff measures;

(ii) TID has been strengthening the dissemination of information in respect of the Hong Kong rules of origin to the trade and following up with the trade on the related review; and

(iii) The Hong Kong Trade Development Council (TDC) organises free seminars with expert speakers to help the trade understand the relevant trade measures and possible responses, and will also continue to help the trade develop emerging markets and production base through organising trade missions, business matching services, etc.

In addition, the Government has also strengthened support to the trade in developing markets. The Government has launched the ASEAN Programme under the Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales (BUD Fund) on August 1, 2018 to provide funding support to individual non-listed Hong Kong enterprises to undertake projects for enhancing their competitiveness and furthering business development in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) market. Enterprises can obtain a maximum funding of \$1 million on a matching basis for carrying out up to 10 ASEAN projects. In addition, to strengthen support to SMEs in exploring new markets and new business opportunities, the cumulative funding ceiling per enterprise for the current SME Export Marketing Fund and the Mainland Programme under the BUD Fund has been doubled, i.e. from \$200,000 and \$500,000 to \$400,000 and \$1 million respectively.

Moreover, the Government has capped the charge for each import and export declaration at \$200 since August 1, 2018, so as to further lower the cost of importing and exporting high-value goods (Note 1) to and from Hong Kong, and enhance Hong Kong's advantage as a trading hub for these goods. SMEs can also benefit from the measure.

The outcome of the meeting between the Chinese and US leaders on the margin of the G20 Leaders' Summit was positive. The Government is pleased to see that China and the US return to the negotiation table and continue dialogue on trade matters. The above progress can in the short run alleviate the tense sentiment in the market.

In the medium to long term, the Government will continue to closely monitor developments, maintain close communication with the trade and adopt a multi-pronged approach. The Government will continue to establish stronger bilateral ties with like-minded trading partners and deepen Hong Kong's economic integration with different parts of the world through negotiating and forging Free Trade Agreements and investment agreements. The Government will expand our overseas Economic and Trade Office coverage to new partners and markets with close economic and trade relations with Hong Kong and with development potential, so as to tap business opportunities and boost foreign direct investment into Hong Kong. The Government will continue to organise business missions with the TDC for the trade to explore business opportunities in new markets. The Government will also continue to assist the trade in grasping the opportunities brought by the Belt and Road Initiative and the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

In addition, the Government will continue to promote the development of tourism industry to drive spending and support the continued growth of the Hong Kong economy. The Government will support the Hong Kong Tourism Board's promotion work in overseas and Mainland source markets, nurture and develop tourism projects and products with Hong Kong and international characteristics, including culture, heritage, green and creative tourism, strengthen and enhance Hong Kong's status as a destination for Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition tourism, a regional cruise hub as well as the Events Capital of Asia to attract more visitors to Hong Kong.

Note 1: This refers to goods with value above \$1.644 million. Prior to implementation of the cap, import and export of goods exceeding the above value threshold used to draw declaration charges above \$200.

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## LCQ9: Handling of registration and disciplinary offences of engineers

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Pierre Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (January 9):

Question:

The Engineers Registration Board (ERB) is a statutory body established under section 3 of the Engineers Registration Ordinance (Cap. 409), and is mainly responsible for handling matters relating to the registration and disciplinary offences of professional engineers, etc. Regarding the handling of the registration and disciplinary offences of engineers, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the existing channels and procedures for members of the public to lodge complaints to ERB about registered professional engineers committing disciplinary offences;

(2) of (i) the number of complaints about registered professional engineers committing disciplinary offences received by ERB and, among this type of complaints, the respective numbers of those (ii) which involved the disciplinary offences as stated in sections 20(1)(b) or (g) of Cap. 409, (iii) which were referred to an inquiry committee under ERB for conducting an inquiry, (iv) which were found unsubstantiated, and (v) the processing of which is not yet completed, in each of the past five years (set out in Table 1);

Table 1

Complaints about registered professional engineers committing disciplinary offences	Number of complaints				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
(i)					
(ii)					

(iii)					
(iv)					
(v)					

(3) of the (i) average, (ii) longest and (iii) shortest time taken by an inquiry committee under ERB to process the complaints the processing of which was completed in each of the past five years;

(4) of the respective numbers of cases in each of the past five years in which an inquiry committee under ERB found that the registered professional engineers concerned had committed the following disciplinary offences (set out in Table 2):

- (i) committing misconduct or neglect in any professional respect,
- (ii) failure, without reasonable excuse, to attend before an inquiry committee when summoned either as a witness or as a person in respect of whom the inquiry committee was meeting, and
- (iii) having been convicted in Hong Kong or elsewhere of any offence which might bring the profession into disrepute and sentenced to imprisonment;

Table 2

Disciplinary offence found to have been committed by registered professional engineers	Number of cases				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
(i)					
(ii)					
(iii)					

(5) as section 28 of Cap. 409 provides that any person who is aggrieved by any disciplinary order made by an inquiry committee in respect of him may appeal to the Court of Appeal, of the respective numbers of appeals which were (i) lodged to the Court of Appeal, (ii) rejected, (iii) allowed and (iv) withdrawn, in each of the past five years (set out in Table 3);

Table 3

Appeals lodged under section 28 of Cap. 409	Number of appeals				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
(i)					
(ii)					

(iii)					
(iv)					

(6) of the respective numbers of (i) engineers whose names were removed from the register as they had been found to have committed disciplinary offences, (ii) applications made by these engineers for restoration of their names to the register, and (iii) cases in which those engineers were allowed to restore their names to the register, in the past five years (set out in Table 4);

Table 4

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
(i)					
(ii)					
(iii)					

(7) apart from ERB, of the organisations and government departments which are responsible for handling the registration of engineers;

(8) given that the registration of an engineer under the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Cap. 618) was suspended last year, whether ERB has, in collaboration with the monitoring organisations and government departments mentioned in (7), established a reciprocal notification mechanism on irregularities/disciplinary offences of registered engineers, so that the ERB can take follow-up actions in accordance with the provisions under Cap. 409; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(9) of the number of lay members of ERB in each of the past five years?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the Dr Hon Pierre Chan's question with regard to the handling of registration and disciplinary offences of professional engineers by the Engineers Registration Board (ERB) pursuant to the Engineers Registration Ordinance (Cap. 409) (the Ordinance) is as follows:

(1) Any person may lodge a complaint in writing to the ERB in relation to disciplinary offence of a registered professional engineer. Upon receipt of a complaint, the ERB shall appoint two members of the ERB to review the relevant facts and information in accordance with the provision of the Ordinance. The two members shall determine whether there is sufficient prima facie evidence of the complaint and report to the ERB.

If there is prima facie evidence, the ERB shall refer the complaint to

an inquiry committee comprising three persons to conduct a hearing. Upon completion of the hearing and the inquiry committee finds that the concerned individual has committed a disciplinary offence, the case together with the order made by inquiry committee will be submitted to a review committee comprising four persons appointed by the ERB for review before implementation.

The ERB will inform the complainant of the decision with reason for any complaint that are found unsubstantiated due to insufficient prima facie evidence or by the inquiry committee after hearing.

(2) In the past five years, the number of complaints about registered professional engineers committing disciplinary offences were:

Table 1

Complaints about registered professional engineers committing disciplinary offences	Number of cases				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
(i) number of complaints received by ERB	3	1	3	0	1
(ii) disciplinary offences related to sections 20(1)(b) or (g) of Cap. 409	0	1	1	0	1
(iii) referral to an inquiry committee under ERB for conducting an inquiry	2	1	1	0	0
(iv) unsubstantiated due to insufficient prima facie evidence	1	0	2	0	0
(v) unsubstantiated after hearing	0	0	0	0	0
(vi) processing not yet completed	0	0	0	0	1

(3) In the past five years, the time taken by an inquiry committee under the ERB to complete processing of the complaints were:

- (i) the average time was one year and 11 months;
- (ii) the longest time was two years and six months; and
- (iii) the shortest time was 10 months.

(4) In the past five years, the number of cases in which an inquiry committee under the ERB found that the registered professional engineers concerned had committed the following disciplinary offences were:

Table 2

Disciplinary offence found to have been committed by registered professional engineers	Number of cases				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
(i) committing misconduct or neglect in any professional respect	2	0	1	0	0
(ii) failure, without reasonable excuse, to attend before an inquiry committee when summoned either as a witness or as a person in respect of whom the inquiry committee was meeting	0	0	0	0	0
(iii) conviction in Hong Kong or elsewhere of any offence which might bring the profession into disrepute and sentenced to imprisonment	0	1	0	0	0

(5) In the past five years, the ERB did not receive any appeal case to the Court of Appeal.

(6) In the past five years, the numbers of engineers whose names were removed from the register as they had been found to have committed disciplinary offences; applications made by these engineers for restoration of their names to the register; and cases in which those engineers were allowed to restore their names to the register were:

Table 3

	Number				
	2014#	2015	2016	2017	2018
(i) engineers whose names were removed from the register as they had been found to have committed disciplinary offences	1	0	1	0	0



(ii) applications made by these engineers for restoration of their names to the register	0	0	0	0	0
(iii) cases in which those engineers were allowed to restore their names to the register	0	0	0	0	0

#For the second case of disciplinary offence found to have been committed by a registered professional engineer in 2014, the inquiry committee reprimanded the registered professional engineer in writing and recorded the reprimand on the register.

(7) The ERB is a statutory body established under the provision of the Ordinance. The ERB acts independently on matters related to registration of professional engineers, on which other organisations or government departments are not involved.

(8) The Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Cap. 618) and this Ordinance are two independent pieces of legislation with different aspects of regulation. In handling matters on disciplinary offence of a registered professional engineer, the ERB will consider the relevant provisions of the Ordinance, but not the provisions of the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Cap. 618). Hence, there is no such mutual notification mechanism.

(9) Pursuant to the provision of the Ordinance, the ERB consists of not less than 20 members appointed by the Council of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers and, in addition, may include one member appointed by the Chief Executive. The abovementioned Council shall not appoint a person as a member of the ERB unless he is a member of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers.