

LCQ16: Safety, repair and maintenance of lifts

Following is a question by Dr Hon Elizabeth Quat and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (June 6):

Question:

Recently, incidents of lift failures causing casualties have occurred frequently, arousing grave public concern about issues such as the safety, maintenance, repair and replacement of lifts. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of written notifications, received by the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services from the responsible persons for lifts in each of the past five years, in respect of the lift incidents specified in Schedule 7 to the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Cap 618) (with a breakdown by (i) District Council district and (ii) whether the notification was made within the deadline of 24 hours after the incident came to the person's knowledge), as well as the number of such incidents made public by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD); the penalties imposed on the persons convicted for failing to give notifications within the deadline;

(2) whether EMSD will make public more information about registered lift contractors (contractors), including the company scale, the number of workers/engineers, the qualifications held by the workers/engineers and the records of non-compliance; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether EMSD will publish reference costs for repair and maintenance of lifts for reference by members of the public; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) of the current total number of lifts throughout the territory and, among them, the respective numbers and percentages of those which are over 20 and over 25 years old;

(5) given that the Code of Practice for Lift Works and Escalator Works (the Code) issued by EMSD has no legal effect and does not contain provisions on penalties, whether the Government will consider (i) increasing the penalties for contractors whose aggregate points under the current performance monitoring points system have reached a certain level (e.g. prohibiting them from bidding for the Government's lift works contracts for a certain period of time), and (ii) implementing a performance monitoring points system for registered workers/engineers; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(6) whether the Government will consider incorporating into Cap 618 those clauses in the Code which are particularly important to the protection of users' safety; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(7) of the current number of lifts inspected by EMSD each year on average, as well as the mechanism, workflow and criteria for selection of targets for inspection; whether it will consider giving priority to the inspection of lifts which are 20 years old or above; whether it will step up the monitoring of contractors and registered lift engineers, including stepping up the review of their work and surprise inspection; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(8) whether the Government will draw up an action plan for enhancing the safety of lifts throughout the territory and give priority to enhancing the safety of those lifts which were installed before 1993, including requiring lifts to have/be retrofitted with (i) a double brake system, (ii) an unintended car movement protection device, (iii) an ascending car overspeed protection device, (iv) advanced car door mechanical lock and door safety edge, (v) an intercom and CCTV system, (vi) an obstruction switch to protect suspension ropes, and (vii) automatic rescue devices; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(9) whether the Government will expeditiously establish a dedicated subsidy scheme for enhancing lift safety, with a view to subsidising safety enhancement works for lifts 20 years old or above; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(10) whether it has assessed if the existing manpower establishment of EMSD is adequate for dovetailing with the implementation of various measures to enhance lift safety; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the negative, of the number of staff members needed to be recruited;

(11) whether it knows the annual average (i) number of graduates from lift repair and maintenance courses and (ii) number of persons joining the industry, in the past five years; whether the Government will take measures to improve the remuneration packages of lift and escalator repair works practitioners so as to attract new blood to join the industry; and

(12) as some contractors who are not the original manufacturers of the lifts concerned are unable to obtain the lift plans from the original manufacturers, which has undermined the quality of their repair work, whether the Government will enact legislation for mandatory provision of lift plans by the original manufactures to their counterparts, so as to ensure the quality of repair works; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The operation of lifts in Hong Kong is regulated by the Lifts and

Escalators Ordinance (Cap 618) (the Ordinance), which was put into operation on December 17, 2012, to replace the repealed Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance (Cap 327). The Ordinance introduces a series of new and enhanced regulatory measures including stipulating clearly the responsibilities of the Responsible Person (i.e. owner of the lift/escalator and any person who has the management or control of the lift/escalator), the Registered Contractor, the Registered Engineer and the Registered Worker. Since the Ordinance came into operation, the number of incidents (Note) that must be reported to the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) involving failure of lift and escalator equipment has been remarkably reduced as compared with that before the Ordinance was put in effect, with a reduction of 72 per cent from an average of 28 cases per year from 2010 to 2012 to an average of 7.8 cases per year from 2013 to 2017. The EMSD will continue to strictly enforce the Ordinance and is committed to introducing various measures to enhance the safety of aged lifts, so as to ensure that the public can enjoy safe lift services.

Our reply to the question raised by Dr Hon Quat is as follows:

1. The number of written notifications, received by the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services from the Responsible Persons for lifts in each of the past five years, in respect of the lift incidents stipulated in Schedule 7 to the Ordinance is 330 in 2013, 446 in 2014, 439 in 2015, 427 in 2016 and 461 in 2017. Their distribution (by District Council district) is as follows*:

District	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Central & Western	8.2%	6.6%	7.5%	5.9%	7.8%
Eastern	10.1%	11.1%	9.6%	10.3%	7.5%
Southern	3.7%	2.9%	3.9%	3.3%	4.0%
Wan Chai	5.0%	7.7%	8.1%	7.3%	8.7%
Kowloon City	4.2%	5.3%	7.3%	6.8%	5.4%
Kwun Tong	8.0%	9.0%	5.5%	6.8%	8.0%
Sham Shui Po	5.0%	7.7%	6.0%	4.9%	2.8%
Yau Tsim Mong	2.7%	4.5%	11.7%	11.2%	11.6%
Wong Tai Sin	3.2%	3.4%	4.4%	3.5%	5.4%
Islands	2.4%	2.6%	3.1%	5.9%	4.0%
Kwai Tsing	10.3%	7.7%	7.0%	4.7%	7.3%
North	5.0%	4.0%	2.6%	2.6%	3.8%
Sai Kung	6.9%	6.3%	2.6%	5.9%	3.8%
Sha Tin	6.6%	3.4%	3.1%	5.4%	3.1%
Tai Po	3.4%	2.1%	4.4%	4.0%	3.8%
Tsuen Wan	6.6%	6.9%	6.2%	4.2%	4.7%
Tuen Mun	4.8%	5.0%	5.2%	5.2%	4.7%
Yuen Long	3.7%	3.7%	1.8%	2.3%	3.5%

* The figures have been shown by rounding up or down and they may not be equal to 100 per cent when summing up.

The EMSD will publish quarterly the statistics of the reportable incidents together with the announcement of "Registered Contractors' Performance Rating" on the department's website.

According to records, the main reason that the Responsible Persons did not notify the EMSD within 24 hours after the incident was that they did not immediately know that or could not clearly distinguish whether the case was a reportable incident. At present, the EMSD does not keep statistics of such cases by categories. The EMSD will take into account the seriousness of the case (such as whether the Responsible Person has been repeatedly in breach of the requirements) and whether they have reasonable excuse, to decide if enforcement actions should be taken, which may include issuing of advisory or warning letters or carrying out of prosecution. In the past five years, the EMSD has issued a total of 16 advisory letters to relevant Responsible Persons for their failure to notify the EMSD of the incident within 24 hours after the incident came to their knowledge.

(2) and (3) Registered lift contractors are required to arrange and supervise qualified persons to carry out lift works. Registered lift contractors are also required to provide sufficient workforce and provide adequate training and instructions to their workers so as to ensure the lift works can be carried out safely and properly. The EMSD will conduct regular audits on registered lift contractors to check whether there are sufficient workforce, skills, staff training, etc.

In order to assist Responsible Persons for lifts in selecting a suitable registered lift contractor, the EMSD provides the following information for reference by the Responsible Persons:

* The maintenance price figures and related information for lifts at private residential and commercial premises are released on a half-yearly basis to increase the transparency of the market prices;

* The "Registered Contractors' Performance Rating" is announced on a quarterly basis to indicate the performance of each contractor in terms of safety and services quality. When the contractor is involved in a serious incident under investigation, the EMSD will add remarks to the contractor concerned in the webpage announcing the performance rating; and

* In order to facilitate the Responsible Persons to invite tenders for the maintenance or modernisation works for their lifts, the EMSD has prepared the "Sample Contract for Procurement of Comprehensive Lift/Escalator Maintenance Service" and "Sample Specifications for Engagement of Registered Lift Contractor for Carrying out Lift Modernisation Works" for reference by the Responsible Persons during tendering.

The EMSD will continue to listen to the views of various stakeholders and provide appropriate technical support for the Responsible Persons.

(4) As of the end of 2017, there were about 66 200 lifts in Hong Kong, of

which about 35 200 (about 53 per cent of the total) and about 27 900 (about 42 per cent of the total) were more than 20 and 25 years old (years that the lift has been put into service) respectively.

(5) and (6) The Code of Practice for Lift Works and Escalator Works (the Code) is issued by the EMSD under the provisions of the Ordinance. The Code provides practical guidance for reference by the registered persons and states that they must comply with the procedures stipulated under the Ordinance when carrying out lift or escalator works.

During the daily surveillance checks and incident investigations, if the EMSD discovers that a contractor and/or Registered Worker/Engineer has performed unsatisfactorily or even contravened the Ordinance, the EMSD will take appropriate action according to the seriousness of the case. For serious cases, prosecution will be taken in accordance with the Ordinance and/or the cases will be submitted to the Disciplinary Board Panel for hearing, and the contractor and/or Registered Worker/Engineer concerned may eventually be subject to cancellation or suspension of registration. As the relevant procedures will take time, the EMSD has introduced the "Registered Lift and Escalator Contractors' Performance Rating System", as an administrative measure other than enforcement under the Ordinance. This will enable the EMSD to deduct the score of a contractor immediately according to the seriousness of the incident. The scores will be uploaded to the department's website so that the public can know the performance of each contractor in a timely manner, thus enabling them to choose a suitable contractor to provide maintenance services for their lifts. The EMSD will also make remarks in the said website promptly when a contractor is involved in a serious incident under investigation, so that the public can make a holistic assessment when choosing their lift contractors.

The EMSD will review and revise the "Registered Lift and Escalator Contractors' Performance Rating System" from time to time. As the EMSD has received suggestions from many stakeholders recently, it will initiate a new round of review with a view to further improving the system.

(7) The EMSD adopts a risk-based approach and strengthens inspections for lifts with higher risk factors, such as those with longer in-service years, frequent complaints/failures, so as to monitor the maintenance works and check for contraventions of the Ordinance. The EMSD conducted about 11 200 inspections of lifts and escalators in 2017.

The EMSD will make greater efforts to inspect the maintenance and examination of lifts, in particular those components which will affect the safe operation of lifts. It is expected that the number of inspections this year will increase to about 14 000, i.e. an increase of 25 per cent.

The EMSD will also review to step up the monitoring and regulation of Registered Contractors and Registered Engineers.

(8) and (9) Lifts must have proper regular periodic examinations and maintenance to ensure their safe use. However, as the lifts aged, the

maintenance problems encountered will increase in terms of number and complexity. Owing to rapid technological advancement in recent years, modern lifts are equipped with more comprehensive safety devices than the aged ones. There are thus rooms for improving and enhancing aged lifts from the lift safety perspective. In view of this, the EMSD promulgated the "Guidelines for Modernising Existing Lifts" in 2011, which aims at recommending the Responsible Persons to install safety devices (including the unintended car movement protection device) for their aged lifts to make the lifts safer, more reliable and comfortable.

As of the end of 2017, there were about 66 200 lifts in Hong Kong, of which about 80 per cent were not equipped with safety devices of the latest standard. Owing to the fact that the lift modernisation is carried out on a voluntary basis, modernisation works of different level have been carried out to about 5 200 lifts since 2011. The progress is not remarkable.

In view of the above, the Development Bureau and the EMSD are actively formulating new measures in short term, medium term and medium to long term to enhance the safety of aged lifts, thereby further protecting public safety.

(10) The EMSD attaches great importance to lift and escalator safety, and has set up a dedicated team responsible for regulating lift and escalator safety throughout the territory. In 2018/19, the EMSD has increased the manpower of the dedicated team to 43 staff members, in order to strengthen the inspections of aged lifts. Regarding the new series of measures that will be implemented in the future, the EMSD will further examine the manpower requirements to cope with the additional workload.

(11) As of the end of 2017, there were about 66 200 lifts and about 9 300 escalators in Hong Kong. From 2012 to 2017, the total number of lifts and escalators increased from about 69 000 to about 75 600, i.e. an increase of about 10 per cent, while the number of Registered Workers increased from about 4 900 to about 5 700, i.e. an increase of about 16 per cent. In recent years, Registered Contractors have also been actively recruiting general workers in addition to Registered Workers and there was an increase in general workers from about 700 in 2012 to about 1 850 in 2017. After these general workers have received relevant training and accumulated sufficient experience, they can apply to become Registered Workers. Therefore, the total number of workers increased from about 5 600 in 2012 to about 7 570 in 2017, i.e. an increase of about 35 per cent, which was higher than the increase in number of lifts and escalators in the same period. This shows that the industry's manpower situation is gradually improving.

In the past five years, the average annual number of intakes and graduates of relevant lift courses, and the change in manpower of Registered Workers and general workers are as follows:

Academic Year	Number of intakes of apprentice course	Number of graduates of apprentice course**
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2013/14	95	27
2014/15	102	31
2015/16	205	32
2016/17	251	53
2017/18	255	This academic year has not yet finished

**The number of graduates is the number of students who completed the course and were graduated in the respective academic year. In general, the apprenticeship course is a four-year course and therefore the graduates of the respective year are normally students who enrolled the course four years ago or before.

Year	Increase in number of new Registered Workers as compared with a year before	Increase in number of new general workers as compared with a year before***
2013	43	22
2014	219	380
2015	89	411
2016	114	273
2017	299	125

*** The number of new general workers is compiled based on the regular survey of Registered Contractors' manpower situation.

Although the manpower situation has gradually improved, the current supply of manpower is still relatively tight. In order to attract more new blood to join the lift and escalator industry, we have implemented the following series of measures in recent years:

- * The Vocational Training Council (VTC) and the Construction Industry Council (CIC) jointly introduced "Earn & Learn" Scheme in 2014. The number of new apprentices enrolled each year has increased remarkably, from about 70 in the past to more than 200 in 2015 and 250 in both 2016 and 2017;
- * In 2016, the VTC and the University of Hong Kong School of Professional and Continuing Education launched two different courses related to lift and escalator for the practicing workers to acquire the required academic qualifications to meet the registration requirements of Registered Workers;
- * The CIC has implemented the "Contractor Cooperative Training Scheme" for Electrical and Mechanical (E&M) trades (including lift and escalator mechanics) to provide financial support to those who wish to join the lift and escalator industry;
- * Since 2016, the EMSD has started to invest more than \$600 million in recruiting over 1 000 technician trainees in five years to provide new bloods for the entire E&M industry (including lift and escalator trade) to cope with future challenges; and
- * In early 2018, the EMSD collaborated with the industry to produce a

promotional video to attract newcomers to the industry. Production of the video has been completed, which has been uploaded onto the department's website for public viewing.

In light of the fact that more new blood have joined the industry in the past three years and most of them are still undergoing apprenticeship training, we expect that these apprentices will graduate in the next two to three years and join the industry. By that time, the manpower in the industry will increase further, and will be able to take up more lift modernisation and maintenance works in the future.

(12) According to the Code, documents such as manuals and drawings, equipment, spare parts, and tools of the lift or the escalator being held by the outgoing Registered Contractor should be returned to the Responsible Person for safe custody. Registered Contractors undertaking installation of a lift or an escalator should also consolidate instructions provided by the manufacturer of the lift or the escalator and other relevant information, such as type examination certificates, layout drawings, calculations, circuit diagrams, power supply drawings, testing and commissioning results for preparation of an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) manual for the lift or the escalator system. Such O&M manual should be provided to the Responsible Person upon completion of the installation works. When changing lift/escalator maintenance contractors, the smooth handover of maintenance work is extremely important for continuous safe and proper operation of the lifts/escalators. Therefore, the EMSD requires contractors who hand over or take over maintenance work shall complete and sign the "Checklist for Handover and Takeover of Lift/Escalator Maintenance" (including maintenance manuals and drawings). Registered Contractors shall provide full support to the Responsible Persons in accordance with the checklist and the latest requirements of the Code during the process of handover or takeover. Registered Contractors should also keep a copy of the completed and signed checklist. In order to make the Registered Contractors strictly follow the relevant requirements, the EMSD listed such requirements as a point-deduction item in the last review of the "Registered Lift and Escalator Contractors' Performance Rating System", which came into effect in February 2018.

Note: In accordance with the Ordinance, the Responsible Person for a lift must notify the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services of the following lift incidents:

- (i) A person dies or is injured and the death or injury involves a lift or any associated equipment or machinery of a lift;
- (ii) A failure of the main drive system of a lift;
- (iii) A breakage of any suspension rope of a lift;
- (iv) A failure of any brake, overload device, safety component or safety equipment of a lift; or
- (v) A failure of any interlocking device for any door of the lift-way of a lift.

Upon receiving notification of the above lift incidents, the EMSD will arrange on-duty staff for an investigation as far as practicable.

LCQ13: Reducing the use of plastic bottles and raising their recycling rate

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (June 6):

Question:

On reducing the use of plastic bottles and raising their recycling rate, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Government has stipulated a ban on the sale of plastic bottled water measuring one litre or less in the tender exercises, conducted on or after February 20 this year, for the provision of automatic vending machines at government venues, of the current number of automatic vending machines at the various government venues that do not sell plastic bottled water; whether it has assessed the impact brought about by such a measure on the disposal quantity and recycling rate of plastic bottles; if so, of the outcome; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of the current number of water dispensers at the various government venues; the number of water dispensers to be added to the various government venues in the coming three years and the relevant details;

(3) of the respective quantities of waste plastic bottles that were (i) exported, with a breakdown by export destination, and (ii) recovered and recycled locally, in each of the past five years; the processing procedures as well as end-uses of waste plastic bottles that are recycled locally;

(4) whether it has set targets on the disposal quantity and recycling rate of waste plastic bottles; whether it will enact legislation to impose a total ban on the sale of the various kinds of drinks in plastic bottles; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) of the latest progress and outcome of the feasibility study on the producer responsibility scheme on plastic product containers; the details of the next step of work and timetable?

Reply:

President,

The Government strives to encourage all sectors of our community to rise up to the challenge of waste management. Efforts are focused on minimising

the generation and use of one-off disposable plastics while promoting clean recycling, thereby reducing the overall disposal of waste plastics. To this end, we have adopted a multi-pronged approach by taking forward initiatives on various fronts. They include introducing legislation and policies, strengthening education on and support to community recycling, and upgrading the operational standards and efficiency of the recycling industry, etc. These initiatives also help the sector address challenges brought about by the tightening of Mainland requirements on imports of recyclables, and at the same time embrace new opportunities thus arise. My reply to the question raised by the Hon Kenneth Leung is as follows:

(1) and (4) The measure on ceased sale of plastic bottled water by automatic vending machines (AVMs) at government venues is applicable to plastic bottled water measuring one litre or less. Currently, there are some 1 600 AVMs at government venues. Over 40 per cent of these AVMs implemented the arrangement of ceased sale on February 20, 2018, and by mid-2019 the arrangement will be implemented by over 80 per cent of these AVMs. We have already issued internal guidelines to encourage government bureaux/departments (B/Ds) to persuade their AVM suppliers/operators to voluntarily implement the arrangement under their existing contracts as early as possible. By launching the measure on ceased sale, the Government hopes to further create a social environment where the public is encouraged to cultivate the habit of bringing their own water bottles, and to enhance collaboration in waste reduction at source among various quarters and enterprises of the community. Such measures will help promote the practice of "Use Less, Waste Less" and have positive impacts on reducing the disposal of waste plastic bottles. However, the actual impacts of these measures might not be reflected directly in the relevant waste statistics within a short period of time. The Government will continue to step up promotion of reducing the use of plastic bottles as well as support the relevant recycling efforts on various fronts. Nonetheless, as formulation of many initiatives is underway, we are unable to set targets for the disposal quantity and recovery rate of waste plastic bottles.

As to the proposal on totally banning the sale of plastic bottled beverages through legislation, we understand that most countries worldwide enhance the recycling rate of waste plastic bottles and alleviate the burden to the environment posed by disposed waste plastic bottles mainly through multiple measures, and do not head towards the direction of totally banning the sale of plastic bottled beverages through legislation. When the relevant proposal is considered, a prudent balance has to be struck among the various considerations, and a consensus at community level must be reached. At this stage, the Government has no plan in this respect. Meanwhile, the Government will continue to implement a series of measures to enhance reduction of plastics at source with strengthened recycling support. The specific measures are detailed in parts (2) and (5) of the reply below.

(2) Currently, there are a total of over 10 000 water dispensers at government venues, with about 2 700 mainly serving the public. These water dispensers are mostly installed at the active leisure facilities managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, such as sport centres, sport grounds and swimming pools, to provide drinking water for the public. To

further promote waste reduction at source, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) is co-ordinating with various government B/Ds to install additional water dispensers as necessary at new government venues and suitable existing government venues when conducting renovation works, subject to actual circumstances and technical feasibility.

In addition, we also launched a Waste Reduction Guidebook for Large Scale Event Organisers (Guidebook) at the end of last year, which provides clear information and practical examples to encourage and assist event organisers and participants in achieving waste reduction at source. The Guidebook recommends, among other things, that organisers set up on-site water refilling stations at the event venues and encourage participants to bring their own reusable bottles.

(3) The volumes of domestic exports and re-exports for waste polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles in 2017, broken down by destination, are set out at the Annex. We have not compiled any trade statistics on waste PET bottles for 2016 or before. Besides, as no particular code number is assigned to waste plastic bottles other than those made of PET under the Hong Kong Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, trade figures on such bottles are unavailable.

Locally recycled products only refer to plastic or mixed-material products that are made of recovered plastic materials through deep processing (involving procedures such as melting and pelletising). Currently, the EPD does not compile a breakdown of the waste plastic bottles that are recycled locally, nor breakdowns by their local processing procedure as well as end-use.

To assist the recycling sector to address the progressive tightening of Mainland requirements for import recyclables, the Recycling Fund announced in September 2017 that \$20 million had been earmarked to expand the list of fundable items under "Standard Projects" to help upgrade recyclers' ability in turning waste plastics into plastic products or raw materials as well as processing waste paper. The Recycling Fund has also earmarked \$50 million for encouraging recyclers to use compactor trucks for more effective and efficient transportation of waste plastics and waste paper, thereby reducing the collection and transportation costs incurred. We will also continue to support development of the recycling sector (including the plastics recycling trade) through the provision of sites under short term tenancy or long term lease (such as the EcoPark).

(5) The EPD appointed a consultant through open tender in October 2017 to conduct a feasibility study on how to implement a producer responsibility scheme (PRS) targeting suitable plastic product containers, mainly those carrying beverages or personal care products. The consultant will review and analyse the practices in other jurisdictions and the actual situation in Hong Kong, as well as the implications of introducing the PRS on different stakeholders. In the process, the consultant will engage with relevant trade associations and seek their views before submitting a proposal to the EPD. The consultant is collating relevant information so as to draw up an operational framework for the PRS on plastic product containers. The whole

study is expected to be completed in the first half of 2019. We plan to publicise the preliminary proposal of the consultant in due course.

In view of the low economic value of waste plastics, the EPD and the Environmental Campaign Committee are stepping up their current efforts in publicity and public education on clean recycling. The key areas include encouraging citizens to recycle waste plastic bottles first, in particular those of beverages or personal care products, and practise clean separation and recycling to facilitate subsequent recycling processes and seeking of further outlets. To encourage members of the public to proactively practise source separation and clean recycling, we have launched the Community Participation Programme in Environmental Protection in collaboration with the 18 District Councils, introduced the Source Separation of Waste Programme at community level, established the Community Recycling Network and Community Green Stations (CGSs) across the territory, and supported non-profit-making organisations in such areas as conducting educational activities and promoting community recycling through the Environment and Conservation Fund, etc. Besides, the EPD is preparing for the implementation of a pilot scheme on district central collection of waste plastic bottles to collect those received by the CGSs and Community Recycling Centres and, where necessary, those from public and private housing estates as well as public bodies, such as schools, in a direct manner. These waste plastic bottles will then be delivered to competent recyclers for onward processing. Moreover, we are pressing ahead with the preparations for municipal solid waste charging to provide financial incentives for our citizens to reduce their overall waste disposal and actively participate in source separation and recycling of waste materials including plastics, with a view to fostering a circular economy.

Suspicious mobile application related to Bank of Singapore Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Bank of Singapore Limited on suspicious mobile application (Apps), which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the Apps concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the Apps should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

[SCS visits Home Affairs Department](#) [\(with photo\)](#)

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, visited the Home Affairs Department today (June 6) to learn more about the work and services provided by the department and meet with staff of various grades.

Accompanied by the Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Thomas Chow, Mr Law met with the Director of Home Affairs, Miss Janice Tse, and the directorate staff to get an update on the department's work in enhancing communication between the Government and all sectors of the community as well as advocating the development of district administration.

Mr Law then visited the Race Relations Unit to learn about the colleagues' work in providing support services for ethnic minorities to help them integrate into the community and disseminating the messages of cultural diversity.

Mr Law later proceeded to the Wan Chai District Office (WCDO) to know more about the community activities co-organised by the WCDO and its liaison with the District Council. He also visited the Wan Chai Home Affairs Enquiry Centre, where he was briefed on its general enquiry and declaration services for members of the public.

Before concluding his visit, Mr Law met with staff representatives of various grades at a tea gathering to exchange views on matters that concerned them. He expressed appreciation for colleagues' dedication and efforts in providing services for the public, and encouraged them to continue to maintain close ties with all sectors of the community.



Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected red sandalwood (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (June 5) seized about 5 700 kilograms of suspected red sandalwood from a container with an estimated market value of about \$6.9 million at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound.

Through risk assessment, Customs officers inspected a 40-foot container declared to contain gypsum drywall boards arriving in Hong Kong from Malaysia. Upon inspection, Customs officers found the suspected smuggled red sandalwood concealed inside hollowed-out boards in the container.

This is the first time Customs officers have detected suspected smuggling of wood logs concealed inside hollowed-out gypsum boards.

Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting an endangered species without a licence is liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

