

Disciplinary action against registered escalator contractor

The Lifts and Escalators Ordinance Disciplinary Board (Board) has completed hearings for 22 charges of disciplinary offences brought against Otis Elevator Company (H.K.) Limited (Otis) and decided that all the charges are established and the company should be disciplined.

Disciplinary charges against Otis include four charges related to convictions in court for improper escalator maintenance at Langham Place in Mong Kok that contravene the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Ordinance), and 18 charges involving professional misconduct or negligence. The Board ordered that Otis be reprimanded for the four charges against the Ordinance, and be fined \$960,000 in total as well as pay the expenses incurred in the proceedings of around \$590,000. The Board's decision and orders were gazetted today (April 9). Details are available on the website www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/20212514/egn202125142027.pdf.

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) welcomes the decision and will continue to strictly enforce the Ordinance to ensure the safety and reliability of lift and escalator services, with a view to safeguarding public safety.

On March 25, 2017, an ascending escalator at Langham Place stopped suddenly and reversed its operating direction, causing 18 injuries. The EMSD conducted a criminal investigation on the incident and found that Otis, being the registered escalator contractor that undertook maintenance of the escalator concerned, had failed to ensure proper periodic maintenance of the escalator. The EMSD therefore instituted prosecution for Otis' contravention of the Ordinance. Otis was convicted by the court on March 9, 2018.

Having considered the convictions of Otis in court, and the multiple injuries resulting from the incident, the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (DEMS), pursuant to Section 109(1) of the Ordinance, referred the disciplinary offences concerned to the Board for disciplinary proceedings. At the same time, the DEMS also referred another 18 disciplinary charges of professional misconduct or negligence against Otis to the Board for consideration, of which 11 charges involved Otis' failing to submit notices to the DEMS for carrying out major alterations to escalators between 2015 and 2017, and seven charges involved Otis' failing to enter information and particulars of escalator maintenance works into the log book in 2017.