

# Launch of Building Safety Weeks 2024 today (with photos)

The Buildings Department (BD) launched Building Safety Weeks 2024 today (October 26), with a view to promoting building safety messages to the public through a series of activities, as well as working continuously with the public and the building industry to create a safe and sustainable living environment for the community.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of Building Safety Weeks 2024 held at the BD Headquarters, West Kowloon Government Offices, the Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands), Ms Doris Ho, said that the Government is committed to enhancing building safety in Hong Kong, particularly addressing the issue of building dilapidation. A regular inspection programme has been implemented by the BD since the first quarter of this year to inspect the external walls of 360 higher-risk buildings each year, and to use drones and smart technologies to quickly assess the condition of building external walls and carry out emergency works where necessary. The Government also continues to implement a series of building rehabilitation assistance schemes to assist owners in fulfilling their maintenance responsibilities. Moreover, the Government is reviewing the Buildings Ordinance (BO) to explore, among others, increasing penalties and streamlining enforcement procedures. As stated in the Policy Address just delivered, the Government will soon put forward elderly-friendly building design proposals for consultation. One of the themes is to foster a safe and comfortable living environment for the elderly.

Ms Ho said that while it is the Government's responsibility to improve building safety through policy review and measures, members of the public should also enhance their awareness of building safety and comply with government policies, so that the intended policy objectives can be achieved. She hoped that through the Building Safety Weeks 2024 promoting building safety, the community would work together to build a more liveable environment for Hong Kong.

The Director of Buildings, Ms Clarice Yu, outlined the future direction of the BD at the opening ceremony. She said that the Government will put forth proposals to amend the BO and launch a public consultation later this year. The proposed amendments will include enhancing the deterrent effect against non-compliance with notices under the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme, repair orders, removal orders and unauthorised building works, as well as strengthening the registration and disciplinary systems of contractors. It will also propose to increase the types of exempted works and minor works under the BO. The BD will render full support to the Development Bureau in taking forward the work. Meanwhile, the BD will step up enforcement in accordance with the current BO and continue to work with the industry to promote preventive building maintenance through various promotional and educational activities to enhance owners' awareness of the importance of

proper maintenance of their own properties to avoid building dilapidations.

Ms Yu said that the BD has long committed to enhancing its services through innovative technologies, including the launch of Stage 3 of the Electronic Submission Hub (ESH) on June 30 this year to accept all types of plan submissions and related applications, facilitating the instant transmission of documents and communication between relevant departments, organisations, and building professionals, thereby enhancing work efficiency and significantly reducing paper consumption. The BD also launched in March this year the Building Information Modeling Area Tool to enable the industry to conduct automated checking of floor areas against the requirements under the BO, thereby enhancing quality and accuracy of the submissions of building plans. The BD will continue to play the role as a facilitator and strive to streamline the vetting procedures to assist the building industry in enhancing speed and efficiency in building developments. The industry is also encouraged to make use of innovative technologies to improve the built environment.

Building Safety Weeks is a major event of the BD's annual public education and publicity efforts, which include the BD Inno Tech Open Day held today at the BD headquarters. In addition to thematic talks, the Open Day also included various exhibitions covering the ESH, the "WIN SAFE" mobile application, digital rebound hammer tests for concrete, water seepage tests, the use of drones and artificial intelligence to assist in external wall inspections of old buildings, etc to enable the public to have a more comprehensive understanding of the BD's daily operation, as well as to promote building safety and foster a building safety culture.

In celebration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Open Day featured "Learning about 75 Building Plans" as a special activity for the public to learn how to inspect building and minor works records through the BD's Building Records Access and Viewing On-line system. The first 75 successful registrants were given a copy of the building plan, the structural plan and the drainage plan of their own residential unit for free.

Another highlight of Building Safety Weeks is the Building Safety Symposium, which will be held on November 1 at the Y-Theatre, Youth Square, Chai Wan. The theme of this year's symposium is "Building for Our Future: Smart Technologies for Building Safety and Sustainability". Representatives from the building industry, the property management sector, the Government and academia will exchange views on the application of innovative technologies to enhance the safety of buildings and construction works.

Moreover, the BD will hold the Building Safety Carnival on November 9 and 10 and November 16 and 17 at Tuen Mun Town Plaza and Olympian City 2 respectively, with an aim to help members of the public acquire proper building safety knowledge through playing simple games.

For the latest information regarding Building Safety Weeks 2024, please visit the BD's website

[www.bd.gov.hk/en/whats-new/events-and-publicity/index.html](http://www.bd.gov.hk/en/whats-new/events-and-publicity/index.html)).

