

LCQ 18: Repair and maintenance works for lifts in public rental housing estates

Following is a question by the Hon Ho Kai-ming and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (November 14):

Question

Quite a number of households in public rental housing (PRH) estates have relayed that the lifts in the buildings in which they live have been in use for many years and are often out of service pending repairs. On the other hand, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department promulgated in 2011 the Guidelines for Modernising Existing Lifts (the Guidelines), introducing improvement proposals on enhancing the safety level of aged lifts and recommending the retrofitting of safety devices to aged lifts. Regarding the repair and maintenance of lifts in PRH buildings, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of lifts (i) for which replacement works were carried out and (ii) to which safety devices were retrofitted according to the Guidelines, in each of the past five years (with a breakdown by name of estate);

(2) of the current number of aged lifts to which safety devices have yet to be retrofitted (with a breakdown by name of estate); whether it has plans to carry out the relevant works for such lifts; if so, of the anticipated completion date; and

(3) whether it will (i) specify a requirement on the minimum number of hours to be spent on carrying out routine repair and maintenance works for each lift by registered lift contractors (the contractors), (ii) require the contractors to regularly record the conditions of the core safety components of lifts, and (iii) engage independent third parties to review the quality of such repair and maintenance works; if so, of the details?

Reply

President,

Having consulted the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD), I set out the consolidated reply to various parts of the question raised by the Hon Ho Kai-ming as follows:

According to the "Guidelines for Modernising Existing Lifts" promulgated by the EMSD, it is difficult to establish an unified minimum work time for

maintenance works as the time for maintenance of each lift depends on the maintenance requirements by the lift manufacturer, its design, number of service floors, rated speed, rated load, and conditions of lift car, etc. In 2014, the EMSD discussed with the trade about the work time for lifts/escalators maintenance. The trade generally agreed that Registered Lift/Escalator Contractors should allow sufficient time for workers to carry out maintenance works properly. In this regard, the EMSD also issued a notice to Registered Contractors in the same year to remind them that if they were to allocate maintenance works of more than six lifts/escalators for any worker to handle on one day, they should carefully consider the work allocation and ensure that the relevant works could be carried out safely and properly.

According to the "Code of Practice for Lift Works and Escalator Works" (the Code) issued by the EMSD, Registered Lift Contractor, Registered Lift Engineer and Registered Lift Worker should record details of lift works, incident handling, emergency repairs, examinations and maintenance related matters on the logbook of the concerned lift on the day when the works are completed, including details of the replaced critical components of the lift. The Responsible Person should also monitor the completion of works by the Registered Lift Contractor in accordance with the Code, the contractual requirements of both parties, etc., and countersign the logbook for confirmation.

To enhance the safety of aged lifts and the protection of public safety, the EMSD requested the full implementation of the following two measures before February 1, 2019 through the promulgation of the new Code (2018 Edition) which was gazetted on August 10, 2018:

(1) Contractors shall conduct at least two special maintenance works each year for important protective components (including brakes, traction machines and landing doors) of aged lifts that have yet undergo modernisation works.

Contractors are also required to submit to the EMSD the scheduled date, time and inspection results of the special maintenance works via an online platform so as to enable the EMSD to strengthen the corresponding spot checks; and

(2) Contractors shall record maintenance works on logbooks with an improved format to list out the type and details of work involved in each round of maintenance works so as to facilitate more effective supervision over contractors' maintenance works by the EMSD and the Responsible Persons for lifts.

In addition, the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (the Ordinance) stipulates that the Responsible Person for a lift must ensure that the lift and all its associated equipment or machinery are being kept in proper state of repair and in safe working order. The Responsible Person shall engage a Registered Lift Contractor to undertake the maintenance works of the lift and ensure that periodic maintenance is carried out in respect of the lift at intervals not exceeding one month. The Responsible Person shall also ensure that the lifts would be thoroughly examined by a Registered Lift Engineer at

intervals not exceeding 12 months. The EMSD adopts a risk-based approach and strengthens surveillance checks of those lifts with higher risk factors, such as with longer in-service years and frequent complaints or failures, so as to monitor the maintenance works and check against contraventions of the Ordinance.

The EMSD also encourages Responsible Persons to appoint independent Registered Lift Engineers to review the maintenance work of their appointed contractors, and a "Sample Specifications for Engagement of Independent Registered Lift Engineer for Lift Maintenance Audit" is provided in the EMSD's website for Responsible Persons' reference.

For the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA), all lifts in HA's public rental housing (PRH) estates, irrespective of their servicing ages, are maintained and repaired by Registered Lift Contractors in accordance with the Ordinance, relevant Codes of Practice and the requirements of the maintenance contracts.

There are stringent requirements in HA's maintenance contracts, for example, lift maintenance contractors have to submit a quarterly report and record the conditions of major safety devices in the lifts. They also have to conduct routine maintenance on a weekly basis to ensure that the lifts are in safe working order.

All repair and maintenance works for lifts are carried out not only under the monitoring by HA's engineering staff, but are also regularly audited by the Lift Inspection Focus Team of the Independent Checking Unit under the Office of the Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing).

With a view to improving the service standards of the lifts, HA has been implementing the Lift Modernisation Programme which covers the installation of safety devices up to the latest standard. In the past five years (i.e. from 2013/14 to 2017/18), HA launched the modernisation works of 309 lifts in PRH estates under the Programme. Details are at Annex I.

In coming five years, HA will continue to implement the Programme and schedule to tender for the modernisation of some 440 lifts in PRH estates in stages. In 2018/19 and 2019/20, HA will launch lift modernisation works for 78 and 88 lifts respectively. Details are at Annex II.