

LCQ10: Lifts connecting to public footbridges

Following is a question by Professor the Hon Lau Chi-pang and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

Regarding lifts connecting to public footbridges (the lifts), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) how it monitors the cleansing works performed by the contractors for the lifts (e.g. whether the contractors are required to submit regular reports) to ensure that the lifts are clean and bright;

(2) how frequently the maintenance works of the lifts are carried out, and of the average time taken by the contractors to deal with unforeseen lift failures; how the Government monitors and ensures that the contractors carry out regular inspections;

(3) given that the Government has enhanced its newly constructed lifts for the convenience of users (including the introduction of touchless lift buttons, the installation of reflective panels inside the lifts and the provision of buttons on the side walls of the lift cars), whether the Government has plans to adopt such a design in all its lifts; if so, of the specific work plan; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) given that the Government indicated in its paper submitted to the Panel on Transport of this Council in October last year that it was conducting tests on a number of materials and devices (including nano-self-cleaning coatings and nano-fibre filters) for its lifts and lift towers to reduce the accumulation of dust and dirt, whether the results of the tests meet the relevant requirements; if so, of the specific timetable for the adoption of such materials; if not, the improvement plans in place to meet the relevant requirements; and

(5) given that the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department is contemplating the use of cleansing robots to carry out cleansing works for the lifts, whether the Government has plans to introduce more similar programmes to reduce the workload of cleansing workers and minimize the impact of the suspension of lift service on the public?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the Highways Department (HyD) and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD), my reply to the various parts of the question raised by Professor the

Hon Lau is as follows:

(1) The HyD employs contractors on a term contract basis to clean the lifts attached to public footbridges (Note 1). The contractors clean the lift structures (e.g. the external glass walls of lift towers and lift cars) once every three months. Facilities such as the internal walls of lift cars, lift doors and control panels will be cleaned once a day.

The HyD has stipulated in the contracts a stringent mechanism to monitor the performance of contractors. Upon completion of the relevant work, the contractors are required to submit work records, including on-site photographs, in accordance with the contract requirements. The HyD will examine the relevant work records or reports to ensure that the work complies with the contract requirements and is completed within the required timeframe. The HyD will also send its staff to conduct weekly random checks on the work of the contractors. If the level of the relevant work fails to meet the specified standards, the HyD will take appropriate follow-up actions in accordance with the contract requirements and the established mechanism, such as issuing warning letters, reflecting the findings in the quarterly performance reports of the contractors, and deducting the relevant payment in accordance with the contract terms.

In addition, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) is responsible for the daily floor sweeping of the lifts concerned. The FEHD conducts inspections based on the principle of risk management to ensure that the frontline sweeping services meet the required performance standards. Besides, the FEHD maintains effective communication with the outsourced contractors, advises and reminds them of the areas requiring attention, follow-up and improvement. If the contractor is found to be in breach of the contract terms, verbal warning, written warning or various types of Default Notices will be issued to the contractor and the monthly service fee will be deducted accordingly.

Note 1: They refer to public footbridges across public roads which are repaired and maintained by the HyD.

(2) The HyD engages the EMSD to carry out maintenance of the electrical and mechanical equipment of the lifts concerned and the EMSD engages registered lift contractors to perform the work. The contractors will carry out weekly routine maintenance and inspection of the lifts and arrange for appropriate repairs when necessary. According to the performance pledge, the contractor is required to arrive at the scene within one hour upon receipt of a report of lift malfunctions. For malfunctions involving trapped passengers, the contractor is required to arrive at the scene within 30 minutes. In both cases, the compliance rate should be at least 95 per cent.

The EMSD will monitor the progress of the contractors' maintenance and repair work, including reviewing the logbooks and maintenance reports of the contractors, and dispatching staff from time to time to carry out surprise inspections of the contractors' work. If a contractor is found not to have taken timely follow-up actions or its performance is not up to the required standard, the EMSD will follow up with the contractor in accordance with the

requirements of the contract, including the issuance of warning letters and reflecting the findings in the quarterly performance reports of the contractors.

(3) The HyD has been striving to optimise the design of lifts to meet the needs of users. For new lifts retrofitted under the Universal Accessibility (UA) Programme since August 2022, the HyD has introduced touchless buttons, and added reflective panels inside the lifts and control panels on the side walls of the lifts for the convenience of wheelchair users. The HyD and the EMSD will tie in with the maintenance cycle and refurbishment arrangement of footbridges and pedestrian subways, and consider adding relevant installations to existing lifts as necessary, taking into account the actual situation and relevant factors, such as the site environment and the existing equipment of the lifts.

(4) The HyD has been exploring the introduction of new designs and materials to enhance the cleanliness of lifts and lift towers. In March 2024, the HyD completed a number of material and installation tests for new lifts retrofitted under the UA Programme, including the testing of nano-self-cleaning coatings and nanofiber filters. The results showed that the nano-self-cleaning coatings could effectively reduce the accumulation of dust and dirt on the glasses of lift towers and lift cars, while the nanofiber filters could prevent dust and dirt from entering the lift towers through the louvers. In view of this, the HyD will adopt these technologies in its new lifts in future.

(5) The HyD is committed to exploring the technical feasibility of using cleansing robots to carry out cleansing work for lifts attached to public footbridges, including the internal and external glass surfaces of lift towers and lift cars. However, due to the complex structure and narrow space of lift shafts, it is technically challenging to use robots for cleansing. The HyD has commissioned the EMSD to encourage the industry to come up with innovative technological solutions through the E&M InnoPortal (Note 2). In addition, the EMSD and the HyD will continue to liaise with the industry to keep in view the development of new technologies and introduce other innovative solutions for field trials as appropriate, with a view to further alleviating the workload of cleansing workers and minimising the service interruptions caused by regular cleansing.

Note 2: The EMSD launched the E&M InnoPortal which lists the service wishes of various government departments, public organisations and the electrical and mechanical trades, and invites the innovation and technology (I&T) sector, including start-ups and universities to propose relevant I&T solutions for matching. For successfully matched I&T wishes and solutions, the EMSD will carry out field trials in a bid to promote and drive the research and development and application of innovative technologies.