

LCQ15: Structural safety of school premises

Following is a question by the Hon Lillian Kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (March 27):

Question:

It has been reported that as at the end of January this year, at least 14 schools have not complied with statutory notices for mandatory building inspection before the specified time frames, and some of those schools have still not complied with the relevant statutory notices for mandatory building inspection even after more than 10 years since their expiry. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of schools in Hong Kong with their premises already undergone the prescribed inspection under the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) in the past 10 years; among them, the number of school premises for which prescribed repair was required upon such inspections, together with a breakdown by the current progress of such repair works (namely repair works completed, repair works in progress, and repair works currently under co-ordination);

(2) whether the authorities have initiated prosecution procedures against the schools that have not complied with the statutory notices for mandatory building inspection before the specified time frames; if so, of the details;

(3) whether the authorities will provide schools with additional support in respect of the prescribed inspection and repair works under the MBIS, such as reviewing and streamlining the application procedures for the relevant subsidy schemes for aided schools; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether the authorities have received requests for assistance from schools relating to structural safety issues of their premises; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Education Bureau (EDB), my reply is as follows:

(1) As of February this year, the Buildings Department (BD) has issued a total of 63 notices under the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) in respect of non-government buildings used for school purpose (including aided and non-aided schools), 49 of which have completed the prescribed inspections

and repair works (if required) and were issued compliance letters from the BD certifying compliance with the MBIS notices. The 14 schools with non-compliant MBIS notices have all appointed Registered Inspectors (RIs) and completed the prescribed inspections. Their compliance status is as follows:

	No. of schools involved		
MBIS notice not yet expired	1 (Prescribed repair works being organised/arranged)		
Expired MBIS notices that have not been complied with	13		
	Prescribed repair works being organised/arranged	Prescribed repair works underway	Repair works completed (Note)
	5	1	7

Note: Certificates of Building Repair submitted by RIs are under processing by the BD.

Besides, 267 aided schools without receiving MBIS notices have voluntarily carried out inspections and repairs according to the requirements under the MBIS/Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS) in order to participate in the EDB's new programme for conducting the first round of window and building inspections (see paragraph (3) below for details). According to the Certificates of Building Inspection/Certificates of Building Repair submitted by the RIs concerned to the BD, 199 schools have completed the prescribed inspections and 10 schools have completed the repair works.

(2) Since there is progress in the repair works for the schools with non-compliant MBIS notices as mentioned in paragraph (1) above, no further enforcement action has been taken by the BD at this stage. The BD will continue to communicate with the schools and the RIs concerned and provide assistance for early completion of the required repair works where necessary.

(3) Schools are obliged to keep their school premises in good condition and to comply with the statutory notices issued under the MBIS/MWIS. The EDB would provide financial support to aided schools. On receipt of statutory notices, aided schools can apply for the MBIS/MWIS subsidies from the EDB, and appoint RIs or Qualified Persons on their own to conduct the relevant inspections and Registered Contractors to carry out the required repair works. Details of the relevant subsidy scheme are on the EDB's website.

Starting from 2020-21, the EDB has launched a new programme. Professionals and contractors appointed by the EDB would be able to conduct the first round of window and building inspections and carry out the required repair works for aided schools with building ages reached 10 years and 30 years respectively. If eligible aided schools receive the MBIS notices, they can opt to participate in the programme or apply for the above-mentioned MBIS/MWIS subsidies to arrange the relevant inspections and repair works on

their own. Aided schools with school premise reaching the relevant building ages but have not yet received the statutory notices can also participate in the new programme by the EDB on a voluntary basis.

(4) In the past year, the EDB and the BD did not receive any request for assistance in respect of structural safety issues of school premises.