

LCQ18: Metal gates of Public Rental Housing units

Following is a question by Hon Alice Mak and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (November 17):

Question:

I have received complaints from a number of tenants of public rental housing (PRH) alleging that quite a number of PRH units have been broken into and burgled by thieves because the metal gates of such units had security vulnerabilities. However, the Housing Department has not actively arranged improvement works for the metal gates. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of burglaries of PRH units in various PRH estates in the past three years;
- (2) of (i) the number of complaints received by the authorities about metal gates of PRH units having security vulnerabilities, and (ii) the number of metal gates of PRH units for which improvement works were carried out by the authorities, in the past three years (with a breakdown by estates);
- (3) of the types of metal gates installed for new PRH units by the authorities in the past three years and, among them, the respective types of metal gates (i) with complaints received about their having security vulnerabilities and (ii) the units to which they were fitted experienced a higher incidence of burglary;
- (4) as the authorities announced in 2014 that old-type see-through collapsible gates of more than 170 000 PRH units would be replaced in the five years starting 2015-2016, of the progress of the work; whether the authorities have regularly reviewed the security level of the metal gates (including the new-type metal gates) of all PRH units in Hong Kong and carried out improvement works for the metal gates with security vulnerabilities; if so, of the time of the last review, as well as its outcome and the follow-up work; and
- (5) whether the authorities will carry out improvement works for the metal gates with security vulnerabilities which have been provided for PRH units and for units which were sold under the Tenants Purchase Scheme, and bear the relevant repair and maintenance costs in future; if not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to various parts of the question raised by the Hon Alice Mak is as follows.

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has all along been attaching great importance to the security of Public Rental Housing (PRH) estates. The HA has put in place a number of security facilities, such as installing security gates with password locks at the entrances of ground floor lobbies and fire escape staircases of buildings, and providing 24-hour guard services, CCTV and telecom systems inside the lifts and at the main entrance of the buildings which are monitored by the tower guards stationed at the ground floor lobbies.

The HA also places great emphasis on the training of guards. Guards are required to carry out visitors' registration at the entrances of ground floor lobbies at PRH buildings. Guard control rooms also arrange for guards and building supervisors to patrol the buildings and provide them with necessary support. Furthermore, the HA collects feedback from tenants and disseminates messages about anti-theft through the Estate Management Advisory Committees. When necessary, assistance from Police will be sought.

Tenants' co-operation is crucial for achieving good security. In this regard, the HA periodically reminds tenants to close their main doors when leaving their flats, not to disclose the passwords of the entrance gates of ground floor lobbies to outsiders other than their family members, etc. Under safe condition, tenants are advised to notify the estate management office (EMO) or the guards immediately whenever suspicious or unknown persons are found loitering in the building premises.

Upon receiving reports on burglary, staff of the EMO will provide appropriate assistance to the tenant. However, the HA has not maintained consolidated statistics on burglary cases concerning PRH units.

In light of the problem that the old-type see-through collapsible gates require frequent maintenance due to ageing, the HA has launched a programme to replace such gates in about 170 000 PRH units from 2015-16 onwards. This five-year programme is expected to be completed in 2019-20. Up to October 2018, the HA has replaced the metal gates of about 70 per cent of such PRH units (about 120 000 units) under the programme.

Other types of metal gates in PRH estates have been performing well in general. Hence, the HA has no plan to replace them. New PRH units completed in the past three years are installed with sliding metal gates.

Tenants of PRH estates (including HA tenants in Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) estates) may contact the EMO in case they have any problem relating to the maintenance of the metal gates of their units. The EMO will deploy staff for on-site checking and follow-up. The HA will take up the maintenance costs of the metal gates, arising from normal wear and tear. Flat owners are responsible for the maintenance cost of the metal gates of sold flats in TPS estates.

The HA has not maintained statistics on complaint cases about metal gates of PRH units.