

LCQ9: Construction records of public works projects

Following is a question by the Hon Michael Tien and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (March 27):

Question:

Recently, incidents of missing construction records of the Shatin to Central Link Project and the Hong Kong Link Road of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Project have been uncovered one after another, which has aroused widespread concern. Some members of the public suspect that such incidents are just the tip of the iceberg. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether it will check the construction records of all public works projects implemented in the past five years and give the public an account of whether similar situations are found; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President:

The Development Bureau has always attached great importance to the site supervision and quality of public works. Therefore, we have requested works departments as well as contractors and consultants on our approved lists to remind their frontline staff that the contract requirements, including timely submission of Request for Inspection/Survey Check (RISC) forms and proper keeping of relevant documents, should be followed.

Our response to the Hon Michael Tien's enquiry is as follows:

In the past five years, more than 4,000 public works projects were under construction, involving a sheer volume of documents. Coupled with the fact that some of these projects have now been completed, it would be impractical to check all documents concerned as it will require substantial staff resources and take quite long time to complete. In order to realise the situation, we have already spot-checked some public works projects under construction. According to the spot checks, missing of RISC forms have not been identified. Notwithstanding that there are cases in which some RISC forms have not been submitted on time, the contractors concerned have subsequently submitted them (note). In other words, the records of those public works projects being checked are complete and the quality of the works meets the standards and contract requirements.

To ensure proper processing and keeping of construction records, the Development Bureau (DEVB) requested the works departments earlier on to increase spot checking of records relating to RISC in future audits on public

works contracts to verify whether the frontline staff have followed the procedures in processing the RISC or not. Through the Construction Industry Council, we are disseminating and advocating to the construction industry the importance of complying with the RISC system. We also appeal to the industry to provide necessary induction and on-the-job training for their staff to ensure proper implementation of the system. In addition, we have promoted the digitisation of the works supervision system through pilot projects to collect real-time data on site environment and works progress for recording, monitoring and analysis so as to further enhance the standard and efficiency of the supervision of public works projects. In the long run, the DEVB will review whether it is necessary to further refine the RISC system, for example, whether non-compliance of RISC requirements and follow-up action should be handled by more senior resident site staff at managerial level.

Note: In general, according to the requirements of public works contracts, when contractors have completed certain critical works (e.g. erection of formwork, reinforcement fixing, concreting, etc.) and/or certain works are about to be put out of view (e.g. completed piling works), they are required to submit RISC forms requesting the resident site staff to inspect and survey the works concerned. The contractors can proceed to the next stage of works only after obtaining approval from the resident site staff. If the contractors fail to submit the RISC forms, members of the resident site staff are entitled to refuse the conduct of relevant inspection and/or survey check. Nevertheless, having considered the reason(s) for the delay in submitting the RISC forms of individual cases, members of the resident site staff may, if the circumstance permits, exercise their discretion to deal with the late request, i.e. to conduct the inspection and/or survey check first and then follow up with the contractor about the outstanding submissions together with proper documentation of the case.