

LCQ12: Safety of lifts

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Han-pan and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (June 27):

Question:

In April this year, a serious lift accident occurred in a housing estate, causing injuries to two residents who needed to be sent to hospital for treatment. It is learnt that lift contractors often have difficulty in keeping aged lifts under proper repair and maintenance because they are unable to source parts, thereby posing safety hazards. As at the end of last year, 20 430 out of the some 66 200 lifts across the territory were more than 30 years old. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) regarding the Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme, the Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners and the Building Safety Loan Scheme, of the respective numbers of applications involving lift repair and maintenance or replacement works (i) received and (ii) approved by the authorities in each of the past five years; in respect of the approved applications, of the respective total numbers of lifts involving (iii) replacement and (iv) repair and maintenance/parts replacement, and (v) the total amount of funding granted (set out in tables of the same format as the table below);

Name of scheme:

Year	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)
2013					
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(2) of (i) the number of staff members of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department responsible for lift inspections and (ii) the number of such inspections conducted by them, in each of the past five years;

(3) as some lift repairmen have pointed out that manpower shortage has resulted in them having to work overtime excessively and long working hours have caused recruitment difficulties, thereby creating a vicious cycle, of the measures the authorities have in place to encourage new blood to join the trade; and

(4) as the authorities have indicated that they will, by making reference to the approach adopted in schemes such as the Operation Building Bright 2.0,

allocate funding to subsidise property owners in need to carry out lift repair and maintenance or replacement works, of the implementation timetable of the relevant scheme; apart from providing subsidy, the measures the authorities have in place to encourage lift owners to replace aged lifts expeditiously?

Reply:

President,

The operation of lifts in Hong Kong is regulated by the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Cap 618) (the Ordinance), which was put into operation on December 17, 2012, to replace the repealed Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance (Cap 327). The Ordinance introduces a series of new and enhanced regulatory measures including stipulating clearly the responsibilities of the Responsible Person (i.e. owner of the lift/escalator and any person who has the management or control of the lift/escalator), the Registered Contractor, the Registered Engineer and the Registered Worker. Since the Ordinance came into operation, the number of incidents that must be reported to the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) involving failure of lift and escalator equipment has been remarkably reduced as compared with that before the Ordinance was put in effect, with a reduction of 72 per cent from an average of 28 cases per year in 2010 to 2012 to an average of 7.8 cases per year in 2013 to 2017. The EMSD will continue to strictly enforce the Ordinance and is committed to introducing various measures to enhance the safety of aged lifts, so as to ensure that the public can enjoy safe lift services.

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan is as follows:

(1) At present, the Government has made available financial assistance to owners of private buildings in need to modernise or replace their lifts. These include the Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme provided by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), the Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners administered by the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) under the Government's entrustment and the Building Safety Loan Scheme provided by the Buildings Department (BD).

The URA, HKHS and BD do not compile statistical information regarding the number of applications received or approved involving repair and maintenance/parts replacement or replacement of lifts and the corresponding total number of lifts. However, the Government notices that owners may tend to use such financial support on the maintenance or improvement of other common areas based on the conditions of the buildings rather than on the lift modernisation works. In the past five years, the information of applications processed by the URA under the Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme, by the HKHS under the Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners, and by the BD under the Building Safety Loan Scheme is set out at the Annex.

(2) The EMSD attaches great importance to lift and escalator safety, and has

set up a dedicated team responsible for regulating lift and escalator safety throughout the territory. In the past five years, the numbers of staff members in the team are 26 (Year 2013-14), 36 (Year 2014-15), 36 (Year 2015-16), 27 (Year 2016-17) (Note 2) and 34 (in 2017-18) (Note 3). The numbers of inspections conducted by them in the past five years are as follows:

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of lift inspections	9 258	10 850	10 090	8 808	8 801
Number of escalator inspections	1 306	1 423	1 708	1 363	2 430
Total	10 564	12 273	11 798	10 171	11 231

In 2018-19, the EMSD has increased the manpower of the dedicated team to 43 staff members, in order to strengthen the inspections of aged lifts. The EMSD will make greater efforts to inspect the maintenance and examination of lifts, in particular those components which may affect the safe operation of lifts. It is expected that the number of inspections this year will increase to about 14 000, i.e. an increase of 25 per cent. In addition, regarding the new series of measures which are to be implemented in the future, the EMSD will further examine the manpower requirements to cope with the additional workload.

(3) The EMSD has been closely monitoring the manpower situation of the market. Apart from maintaining close communication with the industry, the following series of measures have been implemented in recent years to attract more new blood to join the industry:

- The Vocational Training Council (VTC) and the Construction Industry Council (CIC) jointly introduced the "Earn & Learn" Scheme in 2014. The number of new apprentices enrolled each year has increased remarkably, from about 70 in the past to more than 200 in 2015 and more than 250 in both 2016 and 2017;
- In 2016, the VTC and the HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education launched two different courses related to lift and escalator for the practicing workers to acquire the required academic qualifications to meet the registration requirements of Registered Workers;
- The CIC has implemented the "Contractor Cooperative Training Scheme" for the Electrical and Mechanical (E&M) trades (including lift and escalator mechanics) to provide financial support to those who wish to join the lift and escalator industry;
- Since 2016, the EMSD has started to invest more than \$600 million in recruiting over 1 000 technician trainees in five years to provide new blood for the entire E&M industry (including lift and escalator trade) to cope with future challenges; and
- In early 2018, the EMSD collaborated with the industry to produce a promotional video to attract newcomers to the industry. Production of the video has been completed, which has been uploaded onto the department's website for public viewing.

In light of the fact that more new blood have joined the industry in the

past three years and most of them are still undergoing apprenticeship training, these apprentices are expected to graduate in the next two to three years and join the industry.

(4) Lifts must have proper periodic examinations and maintenance to ensure their safe use. However, as the lifts get aged, the maintenance problems encountered will increase in terms of number and complexity. Owing to rapid technological advancement in recent years, modern lifts are equipped with more comprehensive safety devices than the aged ones. There are thus rooms for improving and enhancing aged lifts from the lift safety perspective. In view of this, the EMSD promulgated "the Guidelines for Modernising Existing Lifts" in 2011, which aims at recommending the Responsible Persons to install safety devices (including the unintended car movement protection device) for their aged lifts to make the lifts safer, more reliable and comfortable.

As of the end of 2017, there were about 66 200 lifts in Hong Kong, of which about 80 per cent were not equipped with safety devices of the latest standard. Owing to the fact that the lift modernisation is carried out on a voluntary basis, modernisation works of different level have been carried out to about 5 200 lifts since 2011. The progress is not remarkable.

As we briefed Members at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Development on May 29, 2018, the Development Bureau (DEVB) and the EMSD are actively formulating short-term, medium-term and medium to long-term measures to enhance the safety of aged lifts, thereby further protecting public safety:

Short-term measures: The EMSD will step up its surveillance checks of the maintenance and examination of lifts, in particular those components that may affect the safe operation of lifts. At the same time, the department is also studying how the Responsible Persons and contractors can strengthen the maintenance of aged lifts that have not yet been modernised.

Medium-term measures: The DEVB and the EMSD will consider the feasibility of allocating funding to subsidise those owners in need by making reference to the on-going "Operation Building Bright 2.0 Scheme" and "Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme", and providing them with appropriate professional support, so as to encourage them to speed up the lift modernisation works.

Medium to long-term measures: The DEVB and the EMSD will study the feasibility of mandating the lift modernisation works in phases. In this regard, we will make reference to the practices of other countries, and take into account the impact on the community and the trade.

We will brief Members on the details of the new measures as soon as possible, especially the subsidy scheme related to the medium-term measures.

Note 1: In accordance with the Ordinance, the Responsible Person for a lift must notify the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services of the following lift incidents:

- (i) A person dies or is injured and the death or injury involves a lift or any associated equipment or machinery of a lift;
- (ii) A failure of the main drive system of a lift;
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- (v) A failure of any interlocking device for any door of the lift-way of a lift.

Upon receiving notification of the above lift incidents, the EMSD will arrange on-duty staff for an investigation as far as practicable.

Note 2: The increase of staff members in Year 2014-15 and Year 2015-16 was based on risk assessment, requiring more staff members to enhance inspections of lifts/escalators. The number of staff members in Year 2016-17 resumed to its normal level.

Note 3: The increase of staff members in Year 2017-18 was due to the continuous increase in number of lifts and escalators, so as to maintain the level of control on lift and escalator safety.

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[TD reminds public of special traffic and transport arrangements on Hong Kong Island this Sunday](#)

The Transport Department (TD) today (June 27) reminded the public that special traffic and transport arrangements will be implemented in phases on Hong Kong Island to facilitate the holding of the flag raising ceremony, a public parade and a procession on Sunday (July 1).

The special traffic and transport arrangements will mainly include:

(I) Flag raising ceremony at Golden Bauhinia Square in Wan Chai

Road closures

1. The following roads will be temporarily closed from about midnight to 11am:

- Expo Drive;
- Expo Drive Central;
- Expo Drive East;
- The section of Road A5 between Expo Drive and Road A2;
- Temporary access road connecting Expo Drive northbound and Road A5;
- Temporary T junction connecting Expo Drive and Road P2;
- The section of Road A2 between Lung Wo Road and Expo Drive; and
- The U-turn slip road leading from Expo Drive East northbound to Expo Drive East southbound.

2. The following roads will be temporarily closed from about 5.30am to 11am:

– The section of Road P2 between Lung Wo Road and Expo Drive East.

Public transport services

1. The bus terminus at Expo Drive East will be suspended from about midnight to 11am. During the period of suspension of the above bus terminus, Citybus route No. 25A and cross-harbour route No. 961 will omit Expo Drive East and terminate at and depart from Wan Chai North Temporary Public Transport Interchange. The bus stop on Expo Drive East near Convention Avenue will also be suspended.
2. The taxi stand at Expo Drive will be suspended from about midnight to 11am; and
3. Parts of the taxi stand at Harbour Road westbound opposite Harbour Centre will be suspended from about 7.30am to 9am;

(II) Public parade from Quarry Bay Park to Victoria Park

Road closures

At around 9.30am, a public parade will be held at Quarry Bay Park and depart from Quarry Bay Park, travelling via Hoi Chak Street eastbound, Finnie Street, King's Road westbound and Causeway Road westbound before terminating at Victoria Park.

To facilitate the holding of the above public parade, the above road sections along the parade route will be intermittently closed.

(III) Public procession from Victoria Park to Central Government Offices

Road closures

At around 3pm, a public procession will be held at Victoria Park and depart from Victoria Park, travelling via Causeway Road westbound, Irving Street westbound, Pennington Street northbound, Yee Wo Street westbound, Hennessy Road westbound, Queensway westbound, across Queensway, Rodney Street, Harcourt Road westbound, Harcourt Road eastbound and Tim Mei Avenue northbound to terminate at the Central Government Offices.

To facilitate the holding of the above public procession, the following road closure arrangements will be implemented on Hong Kong Island:

1. From about 1.30pm, the roads in the vicinity of Victoria Park and the Causeway Bay shopping area (such as Sugar Street and Jardine's Bazaar) will be closed in phases;
2. From about 2.45pm, westbound carriageways of Causeway Road, Yee Wo Street

and Hennessy Road will be closed; and

3. From about 4pm, both directions of Queensway and Harcourt Road, Rodney Street, Drake Street, Tamar Street, the section of Des Voeux Road Central eastbound between Pedder Street and Queensway and the roads in the vicinity of the Central Government Offices will be closed.

Public transport services

A total of 92 bus routes and 14 green minibus routes operating in the affected areas will be temporarily diverted, and one green minibus route will be temporarily suspended. In addition, the tram services between Tong Shui Road and Queensway will be suspended.

Due to extensive road closure in the affected areas, the TD anticipates that the traffic along Hong Kong Island North (including Causeway Bay, Wan Chai, Admiralty, Central and the vicinity of the Island Eastern Corridor) as well as the Aberdeen Tunnel and the Cross-Harbour Tunnel will become significantly congested. Motorists are advised to be patient in case of traffic congestion when driving in the vicinity, follow the Police's instructions and be alert to the latest traffic news through the media.

Members of the public are advised to use public transport services, in particular railway services, and avoid driving to the affected or congested areas, especially in the vicinity of Tin Hau, Causeway Bay, Wan Chai, Admiralty and Central, unless necessary. Early planning of journeys and use of alternative travelling routes are advised to avoid unexpected delay. The public transport operators will display notices to inform passengers of the temporary arrangements. Public transport commuters are advised to pay attention to the arrangements of route diversions and suspension and relocation of stops. The TD and the Police will closely monitor the traffic situation and implement appropriate measures whenever necessary.

For enquiries on the special traffic and transport arrangements, members of the public can call 1823 or browse the TD's website (www.td.gov.hk) for more details.

Tuen Mun Hospital announcement on follow-up of fatal incident involving patient

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH) made the following announcement today (June 27) on the follow-up in regard to a fatal incident involving a patient:

Following the announcement yesterday on the passing away of an end-stage renal failure patient, representatives of TMH this morning met with the family of the patient to further explain the incident.

The TMH Deputy Hospital Chief Executive, Dr Mok Chun-keung, expressed deep condolences to the family at the meeting. He also extended apologies for the sudden death of the patient during hospitalisation. Dr Mok promised that TMH would fully co-operate with the Police in the investigation as well as render all necessary support to the family.

The procedure of reporting to the Police was also discussed at the meeting. TMH stated that upon receiving the notification on Monday, the hospital management initiated an internal investigation immediately. The incident was subsequently referred to the Police and the Coroner for follow-up on Tuesday. Throughout the process, TMH has been communicating with the family.

TMH representatives also explained to the family at the meeting on the surgical arrangements and related risk assessment. After multi-disciplinary consultation conducted on Sunday (June 24), the doctors from the Surgery, Anaesthesia and Intensive Care departments explained to the patient and family that performing an operation to treat the patient's perforation may lead to severe surgical complications in view of his age and end-stage renal failure chronic disease. Having considered the clinical assessment, both the hospital and the patient with his family opted for a conservative treatment approach. However, the patient continued to deteriorate and succumbed on the same night.

TMH believed that the communication between the clinical staff and the patient and his family was suboptimal, which led to the displeasure of the patient and his family. TMH wished to express sincere apologies and deep condolences to the family again in this regard. The hospital will continue to closely communicate with the family and provide the necessary support. It will also fully co-operate with the Police in the investigation.

As the case has already been referred to the Police and the Coroner for follow-up, TMH believes is not appropriate to make any further comment on the incident to prevent interference with the investigation.