

LEGCO QUESTION NO.12

(Written Reply)

Date of meeting : 23 October 2002

Asked by: Dr. Hon. HO Chung-tai

Replied by : Secretary for Housing,
Planning and Lands

Question

At present, quite a number of ground floor shops do not have building numbers displayed on the premises, making it difficult for tourists to locate the shops they intend to visit. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) whether building numbers are properly displayed at existing ground floor shop premises in tourist areas;
- (b) of the plans to ensure that all operators of ground floor shops will properly display building numbers at prominent positions of the shop premises; and
- (c) whether it plans to standardize specifications for the display of building numbers to facilitate tourists in locating shops; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply

Madam President,

- (a) The Rating and Valuation Department is responsible for allocating building numbers and ensuring that the relevant numbers are properly displayed. According to observations made by the Department, in general, most ground floor shops, including ground floor shops in tourist areas, have their building numbers properly displayed. As regards the small number of non-compliance cases, the building numbers are often removed or damaged during the course of renovation.

- (b) To ensure that building numbers are properly displayed at all new buildings, the Rating and Valuation Department will allocate building numbers to new buildings within one month after their completion. After notifying owners and developers of the relevant building numbers, the Department will monitor work progress until the building numbers have been properly displayed. According to the records of the Department, virtually all new buildings have complied with this requirement. There is only a small number of non-compliance cases which involve streets that have not yet been named.

As regards existing buildings, the Rating and Valuation Department launches a building numbering campaign once every two or three years to ensure the proper display of building numbers by owners. During the last campaign carried out in December 2000, the Department sent out letters to owners/occupiers of all ground floor units and owners' corporations to remind them of the need to display building numbers properly. Sample surveys were carried out after the campaign. The results showed that about 85% of the buildings inspected had their building numbers properly displayed.

To deal with the non-compliance cases, the Rating and Valuation Department would issue warning letters to remind the owners/occupiers concerned of the importance of properly displaying building numbers. Furthermore, when the Department becomes aware that a property has been let or is undergoing renovation work, it would issue a letter to the owners/occupiers concerned to remind them to properly display their building numbers after the completion of such works. Appropriate follow-up action will also be taken by the Department.

- (c) With regard to the specifications of building numbers, the Government has prescribed a set of requirements. The building number should be located above or at the side of the entrance to the premises, and should not be obscured. The recommended minimum height and width for a number are 50mm and 40mm respectively. The colour of the number or number plate should contrast clearly with its background. We believe that these requirements are adequate.

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