

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 15

(Written Reply)

the Hon Albert CHAN

Asked by : Wai-yip Date of meeting: 17 March 2004

Secretary for the Environment,
Transport and Works

(in the absence of Secretary for

Replied by: Housing, Planning and Lands)

Question

The Codes of Practice on the Design and Construction of Lifts and Escalators ("CoP") issued by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department require that deflector devices (such as brush bristles) be placed between the steps and skirt guards on both sides of escalators to reduce the possibility of trapping the feet or clothing of users. However, escalators installed before 18 March 1994, the date on which the CoP came into effect, are not subject to the requirement. As I have recently received many complaints about injuries arising from the use of escalators without the above devices, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the number of injuries involving the use of escalators in each of the past three years and the respective numbers of such injuries involving escalators installed before the CoP came into effect;
- (b) of the number of escalators which had been installed before the CoP came into effect, and the number of them that are currently fitted with deflector devices; and
- (c) whether it will strengthen the regulation on the construction of escalators and standardize the safety specifications for escalators installed in different periods; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply

President,

My response to the three parts of the question are as follows :-

- (a) To enhance the safety of escalators and to keep users off the step edges so as to prevent their feet and clothing from being trapped between the skirt guards and the steps, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) requires that escalators installed after 18 March 1994 be fitted with deflector devices, such as protective fixtures in the form of brush bristles suitably placed on the skirt guards.

Listed below are the total number of escalator incidents involving injuries in each of the past three years and the corresponding number of such incidents involving escalators installed before the relevant Codes of Practice came into effect on 18 March 1994. Most of the incidents involved injuries of a minor nature, and those incidents involving injuries sustained as a result of trapping between the skirt guards and the steps only accounted for a small percentage of the total number of injury cases.

Year	Total number of incidents involving injuries ^(Note)	Number of injury incidents involving escalators installed before 18 March 1994	Incidents involving injuries sustained as a result of trapping between the skirt guards and the steps	
			Number of incidents	As a percentage of the total number of incidents
2001	596	443	41	6.9
2002	620	428	32	5.2
2003	589	436	48	8.1

Note: The total numbers of incidents involving injuries include cases which took place on all escalators irrespective of their year of installation.

- (b) The total number of escalators installed before 18 March 1994 is 3 244. It is estimated that about 650 of them (20%) have been fitted with deflector devices.
- (c) The above data showed that most escalator incidents involving injuries were not caused by the absence of deflector devices. Therefore, EMSD has no plans at this stage to standardize the safety specifications for escalators installed in different periods by requiring the installation of deflector devices on escalators installed before 18 March 1994. However, EMSD will continue its efforts to encourage escalator owners to install such devices on their escalators. EMSD will also continue to promote the safe use of escalators, including promoting the requirement for escalator owners to put up conspicuous posters or signs at their escalators to remind users of the proper way to use escalators so as to prevent accidents, including those arising from trapping between the skirt guards and the steps.

Through the Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance (Cap.327), the Government has put in place a stringent system for regulating the construction and safe operation of escalators. The system has been operating well. We also conduct reviews from time to time to see whether there is room for improvement. At present, we do not see the need to strengthen the relevant control.