

**LEGCO QUESTION NO. 3**  
**(Written Reply)**

Asked by Hon Abraham Shek Date of meeting : 28 April 2004

Secretary for Housing,  
Replied by : Planning and Lands

**Question**

Will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the percentage of compliance with the statutory orders concerning defective drainage repair/investigation that were issued in the last three years to owners of private buildings which do not have owners' corporations;
- (b) of the measures taken by the Buildings Department to ensure compliance with statutory orders issued last year to owners of such private buildings;
- (c) whether it has considered creating a specialist contractor list for plumbing and drainage works; and
- (d) whether, for ease of control and administration, it has considered classifying these works into one work category, and delegating the responsibility of monitoring them to one government department?

**Reply**

President,

My response to the four parts of the question is as follows:

- (a) The number of statutory orders concerning defective drainage repair/investigation issued in the last three years to owners of private buildings without owners' corporations (OC) and the corresponding percentage of compliance are given below –

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of statutory orders concerning defective drainage repair/investigation</b>	<b>Percentage of compliance (as at end March 2004)</b>
2001	40	40%
2002	140	50%
2003	1,300	30%

The significant increase in the number of statutory orders issued in 2003 was due to stepped up inspection of drainage pipes under Team Clean initiatives.

- (b) The Buildings Department (BD) has adopted various measures to ensure owners' compliance with the statutory orders. A list of the buildings served with such orders but without OCs has been given to the Home Affairs Department, which would render assistance to the owners concerned, including assistance in co-ordinating the repair works where necessary. Upon request, BD staff would hold meetings with individual owners or groups of owners with a view to resolving their problems in carrying out the orders, including assisting them to apply for financial assistance under the Building Safety Loan Scheme.

BD staff would also conduct checking to see whether the works required in the orders have been complied with. Where there has been no progress in rectifying drainage defects, BD would issue reminders to the owners concerned. Should the building owners subsequently fail to comply with the orders, BD would engage the government contractor to carry out the repair works and recover the cost from the owners afterwards.

- (c) & (d) A water supply plumbing system comprises water pipes and fittings which serve to supply water for potable and fire service purposes in a building. A drainage system comprises above-ground piping, underground drains and channels for the disposal of all foul water and surface water from a building. The installation of the two types of system involve two different kinds of works subject to different functional requirements, design standards and construction specifications warranting different expertise and knowledge in design, construction,

supervision and control. It would therefore not be appropriate to group the water supply plumbing works (plumbing works) and drainage works into one works category.

Plumbing works are controlled under the Waterworks Ordinance (WO), and licensed plumbers are licensed under the WO to carry out such works. To be eligible to become a licensed plumber, the applicant should possess the requisite knowledge in plumbing and pipefitting. On the other hand, drainage works are a kind of building works controlled under the Buildings Ordinance (BO). Registered General Building Contractors (RGBCs) are registered under the BO to carry out building works, including drainage works, according to the building plans prepared by Authorized Persons and approved by the Building Authority. To be eligible for registration as an RGBC, the applicant is required to have a thorough knowledge of building works, including drainage works, and the ability to supervise and manage the carrying out of the building works.

Given that plumbing and drainage works are two different kinds of works, and that licensed plumbers and RGBCs are registered under two different registration systems, it would not be appropriate to create a specialist contractor category to carry out these works.

At present, the Water Supplies Department is responsible for monitoring plumbing works under the WO whilst the BD is responsible for monitoring drainage works as part of building works under the BO. The practice of having plumbing and drainage works controlled under two separate regimes has been working effectively. We consider that there is no need to put the responsibility for monitoring plumbing and drainage works under one single government department.