

EMSD implements short-term safety enhancement measures for aged lifts and announces investigation results of lift incident at Waterside Plaza in Tsuen Wan

In view of the lift incidents in recent months involving aged lifts that have yet to undergo modernisation works, the Government proposed earlier short, medium and medium to long-term measures to enhance the safety of those lifts. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (July 14) announced the implementation of the following two short-term measures:

1. Contractors shall conduct at least two special maintenance works each year for the important protective components (including brakes, traction machines and landing doors) of aged lifts that have yet to undergo modernisation works. Contractors are also required to submit to the EMSD the scheduled date, time and inspection results of the special maintenance works via an online platform. The EMSD will also step up inspection efforts; and
2. Contractors shall record maintenance works on logbooks with an improved format to list the important protective components involved in each maintenance to facilitate more effective supervision of the contractors' maintenance works by the EMSD and the responsible persons for lifts.

The EMSD briefed members of the Lift and Escalator Safety Advisory Committee (LESAC) at the Committee's meeting on July 13 and received their support. The EMSD will issue a notice in August on the aforementioned measures and will allow a grace period for the industry and responsible persons for lifts to be better prepared before the measures take effect. The EMSD will also issue letters to relevant stakeholders and step up inspections to ensure full and effective implementation of the new measures.

Separately, the EMSD has completed the technical investigation into the lift incident at Waterside Plaza in Tsuen Wan on April 8 and has uploaded the report on the EMSD's website (www.emsd.gov.hk/en/lifts_and_escalators_safety/publications/general_report/index.html). The investigation revealed that the wearing down of a component in the brake system of the concerned lift had generated a considerable amount of debris that rendered the mechanical parts of the brake unable to function smoothly, thereby leading to the failure of the braking function at the time of the incident. The lift car failed to stop when it reached at the destination floor and was then pulled upwards by the heavier counterweight until it collided with the ceiling of the lift shaft.

After the incident, the EMSD immediately requested the registered lift

contractor concerned to conduct a special inspection for lifts of the same brand as in the incident during which no abnormality has been identified. Also, the EMSD issued letters to all registered lift contractors to remind that they must follow the requirements under the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance and Code of Practice for Lift Works and Escalator Works to ensure proper maintenance has been carried out for the brake systems of the lifts under their maintenance. While the technical investigation is now completed, criminal investigation of the incident is still pending. The EMSD emphasised that the law will be strictly enforced if contraventions are identified.

Modern lifts are equipped with more comprehensive safety devices than the aged ones and therefore there is room for improvement and enhancement. In view of this, the EMSD promulgated the Guidelines for Modernising Existing Lifts in 2011 to recommend the responsible persons for lifts installation of safety devices (including the unintended car movement protection device, the ascending car overspeed protection device, etc.) to enable safer, more reliable and comfortable lift operation. The EMSD appeals to all the responsible persons again to carry out modernisation works as soon as possible. Please refer to the EMSD's website for details of lift modernisation at

www.emsd.gov.hk/en/lifts_and_escalators_safety/responsible_persons_corner/lift_modernisation_resource_corner/index.html.