

LCQ20: Modular Integrated Construction method

Following is a question by the Hon Doreen Kong and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (May 31):

Question:

In recent years, the Government has been vigorously promoting the Modular Integrated Construction (known in abbreviated form as MiC) method and has adopted such construction method in a number of construction projects (e.g. public rental housing). However, the transportation of the relevant integrated modules is subject to restrictions under the existing legislation and requirements (for example, if the total width of such modules is in excess of 2.5 metres, it is necessary to apply for a "wide load" permit and make special traffic arrangements (including that escort vehicles to the front and rear of the carrying vehicle concerned are required, etc.)), resulting in an increase in the relevant transportation costs and time. In addition, as MiC is different from traditional construction methods, additional personnel with relevant professional backgrounds are needed to be hired for construction projects using MiC. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has compiled statistics on the current number of personnel in Hong Kong who have mastered MiC technology; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether the Government has plans to enhance the training for personnel mastering MiC technology; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as it is learnt that the number of construction projects using MiC is increasing, whether it has plans to offer more relevant training courses to attract more young people to join the industry concerned and enhance their professional knowledge and skills; if so, of the progress; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) as it is learnt that with the increase in the number of construction projects using MiC, the demand for transportation of the relevant modules has also increased correspondingly, whether the Government has studied amending the legislation to, for example, allow vehicles carrying integrated modules with a total width exceeding 2.5 metres to be exempted from obtaining a "wide load" permit and relax the relevant special traffic arrangements, so as to reduce the transportation costs and time concerned; if so, of the progress; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The construction industry in Hong Kong is facing the challenges of manpower shortage, declining productivity and high construction costs. Since 2017, the Development Bureau (DEVB) has been promoting Modular Integrated Construction (MiC) to enhance the industry's productivity and cost-effectiveness. Under the steer of the DEVB, the Construction Industry Council (CIC) and relevant departments have provided design guidelines, codes and practice notes on MiC. A number of public and non-governmental organisations, including the Hong Kong Housing Authority, the Hong Kong Housing Society, the Urban Renewal Authority, the Hospital Authority, social enterprises and private developers, have started the adoption of MiC and there are over 70 MiC projects at present.

The Chief Executive further mentioned in his 2022 Policy Address that a cross-departmental steering committee would be established for co-ordinating the development of high productivity construction methods such as MiC and Multi-trade Integrated Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing. Moreover, a dedicated team serving as a one-stop platform would provide technical support for individual projects and strengthen the communication and collaboration with relevant departments in facilitating wider adoption of MiC in the industry. The steering committee would streamline the related approval processes, formulate measures to strengthen the MiC supply chain, and foster collaboration with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. In addition to expediting housing supply, these measures will strengthen the leading regional position of Hong Kong's construction industry in the adoption of MiC.

The reply to the four parts of the question raised by the Hon Kong is as follows:

(1) MiC modules are manufactured, installed, tested in factories, and the completed building modules are packaged and transported to construction sites for assembly. Since MiC building modules are largely completed before being delivered to the sites, MiC effectively eases the current manpower shortage of the construction industry. During on-site assembly of MiC modules, the skilled workers required are similar to those of traditional construction methods, including skilled workers in lifting, structure, electrical and mechanical, and furnishing work categories. Due to the numerous works trade to be involved, please refer to the information regarding the statistics of relevant skilled workers published on the following CIC's website:

www.cic.hk/common/StatisticofRegWorkers/disclaimer.aspx?lang=en-US

(2) To deepen the knowledge of MiC among construction personnel, the Hong Kong Institute of Construction (HKIC) of the CIC has provided the following training programmes, covering MiC project management, site management and assembly process of MiC:

- MiC Project Implementation (Project Managers)
- Certificate in MiC for Foreman
- Certificate in MiC Unit Installation

In addition, the DEVB established the cross-departmental steering committee in early January 2023 for co-ordinating the development of high productivity construction methods. The steering committee will formulate measures to strengthen the MiC supply chain, which include conducting regular reviews with the CIC and other industry representatives of the demand for MiC training to cope with the development of MiC.

(3) In addition to promoting the use of MiC in Hong Kong, the DEVB actively implements "Construction 2.0" and promotes wider adoption of innovation and technology, including Building Information Modelling, digitalisation of public works and the integrated Capital Works Platform to advocate professionalisation and revitalisation as well as to attract more young people to join the industry. Moreover, the DEVB, the HKIC and other relevant stakeholders will regularly review and offer various programmes from time to time with a view to nurturing professional talents and uplift professionalism.

(4) The DEVB has long been working with relevant departments to implement measures to facilitate the industry and promote the adoption of MiC in Hong Kong. The Transport Department (TD) has issued a guideline in July 2022 to assist the industry in applying for "Long Load"/"Wide Load" Permit, which flexibly allows vehicle to carry load with width in excess of 2.5 metres. Under normal circumstances, width of MiC module not exceeding 3 metres is usually transported during daytime, and the TD will determine whether the restriction on the width could be further relaxed after taking into consideration the traffic conditions of relevant roads, cargo sizes, transportation routes, transportation time and other relevant factors of each application.

HAD opens temporary heat shelters

â€‹ The Home Affairs Department will continue to open 19 community halls/community centres as temporary heat shelters today (May 31).

The temporary heat shelters will remain open for people to take refuge from the heat when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force. From 10.30pm to 8am the next day, the temporary heat shelters will also provide bedding and a sleeping place for people in need. The shelters are manned by duty attendants.

For further information, please call the department's hotline before midnight on 2572 8427.

The heat shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Island:

Central and Western –
Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex
2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –
Causeway Bay Community Centre
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –
Wah Kwai Community Centre
Wah Kwai Estate, Kellett Bay

Wan Chai –
Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –
Hung Hom Community Hall
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –
Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –
Shek Kip Mei Community Hall
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –
Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –
Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –
Tung Chung Community Hall
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building, 39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –

Kwai Shing Community Hall
Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –
Cheung Wah Community Hall
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –
Hang Hau Community Hall
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex, 38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau,
Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –
Lung Hang Estate Community Centre
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po –
Tai Po Community Centre
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –
Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –
Wu Shan Road Community Hall
101 Wu Shan Road, Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –
Long Ping Community Hall
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Yuen Long –
Tin Yiu Community Centre
Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai

In addition to the above heat shelters, a number of community halls/community centres can also be used for taking refuge from the heat during their operating hours. For their address details, please browse the following

document: www.had.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/public_services/emergency_services/List_CH_CC_Day_E.pdf.

[Hong Kong Customs detects large-scale](#)

illicit cigarette smuggling case and seizes suspected illicit cigarettes worth about \$80 million (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs on May 22 detected a large-scale illicit cigarette smuggling case and seized about 21 million suspected illicit cigarettes, with an estimated market value of about \$80 million and a duty potential of about \$53 million, in Tuen Mun.

Customs officers on that day intercepted a suspicious barge and two container trucks at the Tuen Mun Public Cargo Working Area in the morning and seized the batch of illicit cigarettes inside two 40-foot containers on board the trucks after inspection. Four men, aged between 22 and 55, suspected to be connected with the case were arrested. Two of them were trucks drivers and two of them were barge crew members.

An investigation is ongoing. Customs will continue to trace the source and the flow of the illicit cigarettes. The likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

Including the suspected illicit cigarettes seized in this operation, Customs had seized about 394 million suspected illicit cigarettes this year as at yesterday (May 30), which has exceeded 50 per cent of last year's total seizure amount. Customs will continue its risk assessment and intelligence analysis for interception at source as well as through its multi-pronged enforcement strategy targeting storage, distribution and peddling to spare no effort in combating illicit cigarette activities.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Customs reminds members of the public that it is an offence to buy or sell illicit cigarettes. Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Postal services to Philippines subject to delay

Hongkong Post announced today (May 31) that, as advised by the postal administration of the Philippines, due to a fire at the Central Post Office building in Manila, mail delivery services to Manila are subject to delay.

Health risk category for Air Quality Health Index reaches "Serious" level

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has recorded higher than normal air pollution levels since Tuesday afternoon (May 30). At 4pm today (May 31), the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) at the Tung Chung general monitoring station reached 10+, corresponding to the "Serious" health risk category. According to the EPD's forecast, it is expected that the air pollution levels will still be higher than normal tomorrow (June 1).

Hong Kong continues to be affected by the outer subsiding air of Typhoon Mawar today. The weather is extremely hot and generally fine, leading to rapid formation of ozone and fine particulates in the Pearl River Delta region. Light winds are also unfavourable for pollutant dispersion.

The EPD expects higher than normal air pollution levels will remain until a few showers early next week.

With a health risk category in the "Very High" range or above, children,

the elderly and persons with existing heart or respiratory illnesses are advised to reduce physical exertion and outdoor activities to a minimum or avoid such activities. The general public are advised to reduce, or reduce to a minimum, outdoor physical exertion, and to reduce time outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. As health effects of air pollutants may vary for individuals, persons who are in doubt or experience discomfort should seek advice from healthcare professionals. The public may visit the Centre for Health Protection's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/content/9/460/3557.html) for more information on health effects of air pollution and relevant health advice.

The Education Bureau (EDB) urges all schools to visit the EDB website for appropriate measures to safeguard students' health and take note of changes in the index. The relevant hyperlink is as follows:
www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-activities/sch-activities-guidelines/index.html .

When the AQHI is at the "Very High" level, employers of outdoor workers performing heavy manual work are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees, such as reducing outdoor physical exertion and the time of their stay outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. At the "Serious" level, employers of all outdoor workers are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees.

Members of the public can check the current AQHI readings on the EPD's website (www.aqhi.gov.hk/en.html) or by calling the hotline 2827 8541.