

Government, industry launch “Building Management Expert Volunteer Service Scheme”

To improve management of old buildings, the Home Affairs Bureau will join the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) and property management bodies to launch the “Building Management Expert Volunteer Service Scheme” next month to provide free professional advice and follow-up services to flat owners.

The Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Raymond Young, said today (March 2), “In the wake of the building collapse in Ma Tau Wai Road, the government as well as the community is very concerned about the management and maintenance problems of private old buildings.

“This scheme has pooled together professional housing managers to enhance the management and maintenance of dilapidated private buildings, especially to provide tailor-made assistance to owners who felt they could do nothing about the issue in the past.

“This trial scheme will offer professional advice and services to flat owners who cannot co-ordinate building management on their own and without professional knowledge. We hope that this scheme helps set an example for flat owners and make them realise their responsibility for their properties. Good and professional property management can tackle the problem of dilapidated buildings.”

Target buildings of the “Building Management Expert Volunteer Service Scheme” can be divided into two categories. The first category covers buildings jointly selected by the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the HKHS. The second category is for flat owners interested in the scheme to submit applications to the HAD. Some 900 flats from the first category and some 100 flats from the second category can benefit from the scheme.

All the buildings covered by the scheme should meet the following criteria:

- residential or composite buildings aged 30 years or above;
- average rateable value of the residential units does not exceed \$100000;
- the buildings lack maintenance or are in dilapidated conditions, requiring maintenance or repair works.

Volunteers joining the scheme come from the Hong Kong Institute of Housing, the Housing Managers Registration Board, the Asian Pacific Branch of the Chartered Institute of Housing, and the Hong Kong Association of Property Management Companies.

In the next 12 months, the HKHS and professional housing managers will pay home visits to families living in the targeted building clusters, offer professional advice and answer their questions directly. They will also prepare improvement plans and make suggestions on issues of building management and maintenance.

To tie in with the services of the expert volunteers, the 18 District Offices and the HKHS will spare no effort to help owners in the targeted clusters form owners' corporations, or to help them get organised in formulating and implementing any improvement plans.

The scheme will also assist owners and corporations to apply for various loan and subsidy schemes, prepare tendering documents and provide them with training courses on building management.

“We will review the effectiveness of the scheme upon its completion. Depending on the results of the review, we shall discuss with professional bodies to decide whether to expand the scheme to other building clusters,” added Mr Young.

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