

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**DEVB(W)095**

Head: 60 - Highways Department

Subhead:

Question Serial No.

0097

Programme: (2) District and Maintenance

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

The number of excavation/road work permits authorized by the Highways Department in 2008 is more or less the same as that of 2007, but the average duration of road excavation works per excavation permit increased from 61 days to 70 days, representing an increase of 15%. What is the reason for the longer duration required for the excavation works? How will the Administration monitor the works to prevent unjustified delay and thus unnecessary nuisance to the public?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Wong-fat

Reply:

The main reason for the increase in the average duration of road excavation works per excavation permit in 2008 is the speeding up of the water mains replacement and rehabilitation works that involve more substantial excavation, and more complicated interfacing and traffic arrangements, than the routine utility works.

In order to avoid unreasonable delays and minimise disturbance to the public, the Highways Department (HyD) will carefully check that the duration of each permit is reasonable, taking into account the nature and scale of the excavation works to be carried out. During construction, HyD will inspect the work sites regularly to ensure that the works are carried out expeditiously in accordance with the permit conditions. "Unattended site" incidents are dealt with as breach of permit conditions, which can be subject to prosecution. If it is anticipated that the works cannot be completed on schedule, the Permittee has to apply for permit extension with full justifications. For an excavation affecting carriageway and extended without acceptable reasons, additional costs are imposed on the Permittee per day of extension in order to deter unnecessary delays. The additional costs to be charged per day depend on the category of street affected, and are tabulated below:

Category 1 – Strategic Streets	\$18,000 per day
Category 2 – Sensitive Streets	\$7,000 per day
Category 3 – Remaining Streets	\$1,500 per day

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters WAI CHI SING

Post Title Director of Highways

Date 19 March 2009