

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

DEVB(W)075

Question Serial No.

1127

Head: 60 - Highways Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) District and Maintenance

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Frequent excavation works on roads have not only resulted in vehicle-pedestrian conflict and dangerous situations, but also intensified traffic congestion. While the estimated number of excavation permits extended was 730 in 2011, the actual number turned out to be 894. What are the reasons that the actual number was 20% higher than the estimated number? What measures will be taken by the Government to shorten and reduce road excavation works, so as to minimise the impact on residents nearby, pedestrians and drivers?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kin-yee, Miriam

Reply:

The increase was mainly attributed to the fact that more difficult and complex deep excavation works were involved in the excavation permits (XPs) during the financial year. As such, there were more unexpected problems and delays encountered during the course of the works, leading to more applications for permit extension.

In order to avoid danger and minimise nuisance to the public due to road excavation works, we exercise stringent XP processing procedures and impose suitable permit conditions to properly manage and control road excavation works. Firstly, we critically assess each XP application in order to ensure that the purpose of the proposed excavation, the extent of the works and the applied permit period are necessary and reasonable. Secondly, XP applicants are required to seek approval from the Hong Kong Police Force and Transport Department on their proposed temporary traffic arrangement schemes prior to permit issuance. During excavation, we carry out site audit inspections to ensure compliance with the XP conditions. In case XP extension is required and vehicular road traffic is affected, economic cost will be charged if the delay of works is caused by the fault of the permittee concerned.

Signature: _____

Name in block letters: _____ K K LAU

Post Title: _____ Director of Highways

Date: 28 February 2012