THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY

Memorandum for the Management and Operations Committee

Enhancement of Security Guard Service in Public Housing Estates

PURPOSE

To inform Members of the new initiatives taken by the Department to enhance the quality of security guard service in public housing estates.

BACKGROUND

2. Members have been previously informed via MOC Papers No. 97/91 and 69/95 on administration and control of security guard service. In recent years, the Department has strived to improve security services for our tenants by expanding and diversifying the scope of security guard service.

3. To enhance security guard service, the structure of security guards has been simplified to five types: Guard, Counter Guard, Special Guard, Supervisor and Controller. The age limit, qualifications, duties and existing minimum monthly wages of each type are summarised at Annex I.

SECURITY GUARD SERVICE FOR RENTAL ESTATES WITH SECURITY INSTALLATIONS

4. In accordance with the security package approved via Papers No. MOC 93/94 and 58/95, a large scale provision of guards is required for -
(I) Housing Blocks with System A - (for Harmony and Trident blocks with full security installation)

There is a Special Guard at the main entrance of each block round the clock and a Supervisor for every three blocks.

(II) Housing Blocks with System B (for blocks of other designs with Closed Circuit Television Camera (CCTV) inside lifts)

Guards are provided in the night shift for patrol duties at a manning scale of one for each 600 flats or part thereof. One Supervisor is in charge of five Guards.

(III) Central Control Room in each estate

A Supervisor and a Special Guard are provided for central monitoring the CCTVs round the clock.

5. Upon completion of the security installations in estates by mid-1997, about 2,200 additional guards will have been provided on our estates at an annual cost of $213M (Annex II). The total number of security guards working on our properties will be around 5,000, over half of which are of Special Guard and above. The resultant total expenditures on security guard service are as below -

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Guards Required</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>4,100</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expenditure</td>
<td>$227M</td>
<td>$279M</td>
<td>$431M</td>
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MEASURES TAKEN TO ENHANCE SECURITY GUARD SERVICE

6. With rapid expansion of the guard service, it is necessary to introduce measures to secure quality service. Some of the improvement measures are as follows-

(a) Provision of Electronic Patrol Monitoring System (EPMS) to Rental Estates with System B Installation
To strengthen control on guards performing night-time patrol in System B estates, the use of electronic equipment—EPMS was introduced. The EPMS is composed of data chips, a hand-held control clock, a data downloader and a Chinese software. The data chip is affixed to various strategic locations to form a patrol route. A security guard is required to visit and clock-in each chip according to sequence with the control clock. With the aid of the data downloader and Chinese software, reports can be produced for the estate staff to monitor the guards’ performance and attendance. Hitherto, forty-four estates have been provided with the EPMS which has achieved good results. Upon completion of System B security installations in another 70 estates in May 1997.

(b) Retraining of Security Guards

(i) Training Requirement in New Security Service Contracts

Training is a long- term solution to alleviate the shortage of quality guards in the market. In order to upgrade the guards and to attract those from other industries to work as security guards, the Department has, in co-ordination with Employees Retraining Board (ERB), tailor-made a training course for security personnel working in public housing estates. To this end, a training requirement has been stipulated in security service contracts commencing on or after 1.12.1996. All security guards of the rank of Controller, Supervisor and Special Guard who do not possess Form III standard or have not undergone recognised vocational training previously must complete and pass the new training course within 12 months from contract commencement.
(ii) Course Particulars

The ERB has contracted with the Hong Kong College of Technology to run a 2-day course of 16 hours. The course content is based on the syllabus compiled by Security and Guarding Services Industry Authority. Details of the course are at Annex III. The first class of the training course took place in March 1997. This is an on-going training programme targeted to train 300 guards in the first year. If it is successful, ERB may expand the programme.

(iii) Funding

No direct expenditure will be incurred on the part of the Housing Authority as ERB and the security service contractors will share the cost.

(iv) Support from Training Sub-committee of the Security and Guarding Services Industry Authority

Our initiative to raise the standard of security service was very much supported and appreciated by the Training Sub-committee of the Security and Guarding Services Industry Authority.

(c) Establishment of a List of Quality Guards

Low pay invariably goes along with poor performance. Hence, at an opportune time, minimum wages for special guards and above will be specified in new and extended contracts. The minimum wages are set with reference to the nominal wage index and market price for quality guards. When the retraining programme is fully established, we will introduce a listing system requiring all security guards working for HA to have completed Form III education or an acceptable vocational training plus a track record of good performance.
(d) Public Supervision of Security Guard Service

In all newly awarded and renewed contracts, the security service contractors are contractually required to provide a 24-hour complaint telephone hotline so that any complaint will immediately be dealt with by their central control office. This hotline number and the guard’s name, number and photo are prominently displayed at each guard post. In the next one or two months, for the purpose of public supervision of the guard service, an opinion box with complaint chits will be installed at the lobby of each block to collect tenants’ feedback/complaints on guard’s performance.

(e) Best Security Service Contractor Award

A Best Security Service Contractor Competition will be launched at the end of the year to acknowledge outstanding services. Preliminary selection will be based on the scores attained in the quarterly performance appraisals. Final selection will be made by senior management staff and probably some tenants’ focus groups.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7. It is anticipated that the gradual increase in guard wages to safeguard quality service as proposed in para.6(c) will slightly increase the 1997/98 budget by 5% from $431M to $453M.

PUBLIC REACTION AND PUBLICITY

8. The new initiatives will be seen by the public as a proactive step taken by the Department to enhance the quality of security guard service in public housing estates and will be welcomed by the tenants.
INFORMATION

9. This paper is issued for Members’ information.

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