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## \$21m needed for office overhaul

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THE Government will have to spend \$21 million to speed up the refurbishment of the Immigration Department headquarters in Tsim Sha Tsui when the department leaves for new premises in Wan Chai.

The amount is to cover an accelerated programme, which will enable the work to be completed within three months before the lease expires in April.

Legislators will be asked at a closed door Finance Committee session today to approve the funds.

Despite the spending, legislators will be told that the relocation of the Immigration headquarters to the Government-owned Wan Chai Tower II will result in annual rental savings of \$46.8 million.

Under the lease conditions, the Government has to restore all original design and installations in the premises at Mirror Tower, Tsim Sha Tsui East.

Restoration work is scheduled to start immediately after the move in January.

An ordinary reinstatement programme would

cost only \$15.1 million, but would take six months to complete and require the Government to extend the present lease by four months, which would cost an extra \$15.6 million in rent.

This would push up the cost of the project up to more than \$30 million.

The Government recommended the accelerated programme because of the substantial saving it represented.

Head of the Property Division of the Finance Branch, Mr Philip Mackley, yesterday confirmed that, under the lease there was a clause saying the Government had to reinstate the property.

The Immigration Department occupies 13 floors of Mirror Tower. When it moves to Wan Chai it will occupy 25 floors of the building, said an Immigration Department spokesman.

He said the Tsim Sha Tsui offices would be closed from January 19.

Meanwhile, the Government will ask the Finance Committee in today's session to approve \$29 million to step up border security.