

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)298

(Question Serial No. 6258)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Please provide information on the following:

- (1) the number of licensed undertakers in each District Council district, and, among these undertakers, the number of those who are allowed, as well as those who are not allowed at any time, to provide storage service for cremated human ashes;
- (2) whether the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department conducted any inspections of the licensed undertakers to ensure their compliance with licensing conditions in the past two years; if yes, the number of inspections, the number of non-compliance cases, the nature of non-compliance, the number of prosecutions and convictions on a yearly basis; if not, the reason(s) and whether resources will be allocated in the next financial year for this type of work (as well as the relevant details); and
- (3) whether the Department has received any complaints about suspected illegal operation of the undertakers, as well as the number of complaints received, the specific follow-up actions taken by the Department, the number of prosecutions and convictions, and the number of premises not allowed to continue to operate, with a breakdown by year.

Asked by: Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok (Member Question No. 390)

Reply:

- (1) As at end of February 2016, there are 113 licensed undertakers of burials in the territory. Among them, 32 are not allowed to keep cremated human ashes on the premises. The distribution of these licensed undertakers of burials by district is as follows –

District	No. of Licensed Undertakers of Burials (no. of undertakers not allowed to keep ashes on the premises)
New Territories	
Yuen Long	12 (7)
Tuen Mun	6 (4)
Sai Kung	2 (1)
North	2
Islands	3
Sha Tin	1
Tai Po	1
Kwai Tsing	0
Tsuen Wan	0
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>27 (12)</i>
Hong Kong	
Central & Western	5
Eastern	1
Southern	0
Wan Chai	0
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>6</i>
Kowloon	
Kowloon City	58 (8)
Yau Tsim Mong	18 (12)
Wong Tai Sin	4
Sham Shui Po	0
Kwun Tung	0
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>80 (20)</i>
Total	113 (32)

- (2) The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) conducts regular inspections to the premises of licensed undertakers of burials to ensure their compliance with licensing requirements and conditions as well as provisions in the Undertakers of Burials Regulation (Cap. 132CB). The Department conducted 340 and 467 inspections to the premises of the licensed undertakers of burials in 2014 and 2015 respectively. In this connection, 87 verbal warnings and ten verbal advice were issued in 2014 while 43 verbal warnings were issued in 2015 to the licensed undertakers of burials for rectification of non-compliance detected during inspections. The number and nature of non-compliant cases and the action taken are as follows –

Year	No. of Inspections Conducted	Non-compliance Detected		Follow-up Action	Remarks
		No.	Nature		
2014	340	62	The licensee or a manager nominated by the licensee was found not conducting the business in person at the licensed premises.	Verbal warning given	The irregularities were found rectified during follow-up inspections.
		25	Register of the deceased's particulars was found not updated or not available for inspection.	Verbal warning given	
		6	Licence was not available for inspection.	Verbal advice given	
		4	Inspection record was not available for inspection.	Verbal advice given	
2015	467	18	The licensee or a manager nominated by the licensee was found not conducting the business in person at the licensed premises.	Verbal warning given	The irregularities were found rectified during follow-up inspections.
		7	Register of the deceased's particulars was found not updated or not available for inspection.	Verbal warning given	
		1	Failure to display licence inside the premises.	Verbal warning given	
		17	Inspection record was not available for inspection.	Verbal warning given	

- (3) The Department received one complaint in 2014 and six complaints in 2015 on suspected illegal undertakers of burials. After investigation, no unlicensed operation was detected.