

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)378

(Question Serial No. 6048)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

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:

A woman who has a miscarriage before 24 weeks of pregnancy is not eligible to obtain a Certificate of Stillbirth for the abortus. It is not possible to arrange a burial and the abortus can only be treated as "clinical waste" and delivered to a landfill.

Please provide the number of abortuses with less than 24 weeks of gestation, as well as the number of stillbirths after 24 weeks of pregnancy, for which the parents could obtain a Certificate of Stillbirth, in each of the past 5 years.

Currently, the crematoria managed by the Department charge a fee of \$650 for child cremation. Does the Department charge the same amount for cremation of a baby born dead after 24 weeks of pregnancy? Does the Government provide any form of subsidy for such cremation?

Asked by: Hon TAM Man-ho, Jeremy (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 211)

Reply:

Insofar as public hospitals are concerned, doctors of the Hospital Authority (HA) will issue a Certificate of Still-birth under section 18 of the Births and Deaths Registration Ordinance (Cap. 174) in respect of a still-born child. The HA follows the guidelines issued by the Hong Kong College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in the definition of "stillbirth" as a baby born with no signs of life at or after 24 weeks of gestation, or with a birth weight of more than 500 grams when the gestation age is uncertain. The number of stillbirths in public hospitals, as ascertained from HA, in each of the past 5 years is tabulated below –

Year	Number of stillbirths in public hospitals
2013	112
2014	122
2015	125
2016	133
2017	128

The Department of Health and the HA do not maintain statistical record on the number of cases of miscarriage before the 24th week of pregnancy.

The current cremation fee for a person below the age of 12 years, including stillbirth, is \$650 with a cost recovery rate at 13%.

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