

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**FHB(FE)102****(Question Serial No. 2110)**

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:

1. What was the financial provision allocated to and the staff establishment of the Joint Offices for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints (JOs) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in the past 3 years?
2. Please provide the number of water seepage cases in the past 3 years in which JOs have visited the flats concerned and conducted investigation. Among them, how many cases have been successfully dealt with? What is the number of prosecutions taken against households which are the sources of seepage?
3. There are criticisms that the equipment and methods used by the JOs in water seepage investigation are outdated, which resulted in the failure to identify the source of seepage in certain cases. In this regard, does the Department have any plan to increase the resources for JOs in the coming year and purchase more advanced equipment for testing water seepage, e.g. infrared thermography and ultrasonic scanning devices, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of investigation?

Asked by: Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan (LegCo internal reference no.: 39)

Reply:

1. The staff establishment and expenditure of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Buildings Department (BD) in connection with the operation of the Joint Office (JO) in the past 3 years are provided as follows -

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
FEHD			
Number of investigation and coordinating staff	220	224	227
Staff costs and departmental expenses (\$ million)	86.3	99.7	109.2 (revised estimate)

BD			
Number of professional and technical staff	64	64	76
Staff costs and departmental expenses (\$ million)	32.0	34.3	42.2 (revised estimate)
Expenditure for engaging outsourced consultants (\$ million)	31.0	36.6	36.0 (revised estimate)

2. The information sought is as follows -

Number of Cases	2016	2017	2018
Reports received	36 376	36 002	36 684
Cases screened out ⁽¹⁾	13 196	14 732	14 571
Cases with seepage ceased during investigation	5 385	5 448	4 757
Cases with source of water seepage identified	6 846	6 253	5 729
Cases with source of water seepage not identified and investigation terminated	3 721	4 172	3 164
No. of prosecutions instituted	95	114	82

Note (1) : These include unjustified cases and withdrawn cases.

3. Since June 2018, JO has applied testing technologies, such as infrared thermography (IT) and microwave tomography (MT) in Stage III of the water seepage investigation on a pilot basis in certain districts. In 2019-20, additional resources will be allocated to JO for creating additional professional and technical posts and extending the use of IT and MT to more districts.

- End -