

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)143

(Question Serial No. 2445)

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:

Regarding the Joint Office for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints (JO) under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Buildings Department,

- (1) how many requests for assistance on water seepage has the new Hong Kong Regional Joint Office (RJO) received? What are the follow-up actions and processing time for each case? What is the difference in the processing time as compared to that before the setting up of the dedicated RJO?
- (2) please set out the manpower and financial resources earmarked for handling requests for assistance on water seepage in the coming financial year (with a breakdown by district).
- (3) will the Department set up a dedicated RJO in Kowloon to handle cases in Kowloon East and Kowloon West? If yes, what are the details, the manpower and expenditure involved and the timetable for setting up the RJO?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

- (1) The duty of the Joint Office (JO) formed by the Buildings Department and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is to handle reports of water seepage in buildings. Upon receipt of such reports, FEHD staff are responsible for Stages I and II investigation, i.e. confirmation the existence of water seepage and initial investigation including moisture monitoring at seepage locations, colour water test of drainage pipes and reversible pressure test for water supply pipes. If the source of water seepage cannot be identified during Stage II, BD will engage outsourced consultants to carry out Stage III investigation including moisture monitoring at seepage locations, ponding test for floor slabs, water spray test on walls as well as reversible pressure test for water supply pipes to identify the source of water seepage. New technologies such as infrared thermography and microwave tomography have been used in suitable cases to shorten the time required for Stage III investigation and

enhance the success rate of identifying sources of water seepage. If it is confirmed that the water seepage sources have caused health nuisance, risk to the structural safety of the building or waste of water, the departments concerned will handle the cases in accordance with the power under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) and the Waterworks Ordinance (Cap. 102) respectively.

The Hong Kong Regional Joint Office (RJO) came into operation in early January 2020 and received a total of 1 113 reports of water seepage as at 29 February 2020. Given its short time of establishment, it is too early to compare the time for processing cases before and after the setting up of the RJO. Working together in the RJO, the staff of BD and FEHD can strengthen communication and shorten the time for delivery of documents in handling cases, thereby enhancing work efficiency.

- (2) The staff establishment and estimated expenditure of JO for handling reports of water seepage in buildings in 2020-21 are set out as follows:

FEHD	
Number of investigation and coordinating staff	241
Staff costs and departmental expenses	\$146 million
BD	
Number of professional and technical staff	82
Staff costs and departmental expenses	\$63.5 million
Expenditure for engaging outsourced consultants	\$42.5 million

JO does not keep a separate breakdown by district.

- (3) JO has confirmed the setting up of a RJO in Kowloon Bay to handle cases of report of water seepage in buildings in Kowloon districts. The preparatory work is underway and the RJO is scheduled for operation in mid-2020. In 2020-21, the estimated manpower of FEHD for the RJO is 88 and the estimated expenditure is \$49.7 million.

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