

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)163

(Question Serial No. 2337)

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:

Due to the outbreak of Wuhan pneumonia, workers employed by the Department's contractors of outsourced services (including street cleansing, market, management of public toilets and household waste collection) often have to face the risk posed by the spread of the disease. With regard to protection of the health of the contractors' workers, please advise this Committee on the following:

- 1) the number of surgical masks (produced by the Correctional Services Department) that have been distributed per month since January 2020 to workers of the contractors in each district;
- 2) the criteria for providing surgical masks by the Department to the workers, including the principle under which the Department considers that a contractor should hand out only one face mask to a worker each day;
- 3) the reason(s) why the Department disagrees with the contractors' acceptance of face masks through other channels apart from distribution by the Department (including those donated by the public).

Asked by: Hon WU Chi-wai (LegCo internal reference no.: 61)

Reply:

- 1) From 17 February 2020, the Department has made arrangements for distribution of face masks produced by the Correctional Services Department (CSD) to its cleansing service contractors' frontline workers for their use when cleaning streets, public toilets, refuse collection points and public markets. Information on the number of face masks distributed to each district between 17 February and 9 March 2020 is given in the Annex.
- 2) It is stipulated in the Department's service contracts that the contractors should comply with all the legislation in relation to the execution of the service contracts, including the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Cap. 509) and its subsidiary

regulation. The contractors have a duty to ensure their employees' occupational safety and health at work, including assessing the risks faced by their employees working in various environments and taking appropriate preventive measures, providing sufficient and appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment, necessary training on occupational safety, and making appropriate work arrangements. In light of the outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the tight supply of face masks as a whole, the Government understands that outsourced cleansing service contractors have encountered difficulties in procuring face masks. As a contingency measure, 700 000 additional masks produced by the CSD are reserved for distribution to frontline cleansing workers employed by the Government's outsourced service contractors in order to protect the health of these cleansing workers and maintain the necessary cleansing services.

- 3) The Department has no objection for outsourced service contractors to accept face masks through other channels (including those donated by the public).

**Approximate number of surgical masks
produced by CSD which were distributed to cleansing workers of
cleansing service contractors in 2020 (broken down by District Council district)**

District	Daily number of masks distributed (between 17 February and 9 March)
Central and Western	810
Wan Chai	490
Eastern	520
Southern	270
Islands	380
Yau Tsim	320
Mong Kok	450
Sham Shui Po	570
Kowloon City	570
Wong Tai Sin	240
Kwun Tong	470
Kwai Tsing	360
Tsuen Wan	400
Tuen Mun	280
Yuen Long	590
North	650
Tai Po	310
Sha Tin	430
Sai Kung	370

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