

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)129

(Question Serial No. 2220)

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 (Ms Irene YOUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

With regard to cases of dripping air-conditioners, please advise this Committee of:

1. the staff establishment, the actual number of staff employed and the expenditure involved for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to handle dripping air-conditioners in each of the past 3 years; and
2. the number of complaints received relating to dripping air-conditioners, the number of Nuisance Notices issued and the number of prosecutions and convictions instituted by the Department in each of the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon YANG Wing-kit (LegCo internal reference no.: 25)

Reply:

1. Under the staff establishment of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in each of the past 3 years (2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24), 337 Health Inspectors are deployed to 19 district environmental hygiene offices across the territory. They undertake various environmental hygiene duties, including handling complaints against dripping from air-conditioners. The nuisances caused by dripping air-conditioners happen mainly in summer. To cope with the substantial increase in workload during that period of time, the Department has recruited contract staff and set up dedicated teams since 2017 to step up inspection, advising and education, as well as to take law enforcement actions targeting buildings where the problem of dripping air-conditioners is serious. The number of contract staff and the salary costs for the teams are as follows:

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (Revised estimate)
Number of contract staff	43	29	29
Salary costs (\$ million)	14.69	12.25	9.46 ^{Note 1}

Note 1: Salary costs decreased since contract posts were vacant on an occasional basis.

2. The information sought is provided as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Number of complaints received	30 806	25 889	31 135
Number of Nuisance Notices issued ^{Note 2}	3 724	2 702	3 032
Number of prosecutions instituted ^{Note 3}	61	67	86
Number of convictions ^{Note 4}	66	48	61

Note 2: If the source of air-conditioner dripping is identified, a Nuisance Notice will be issued to require the responsible person to abate the nuisance within a specified period.

Note 3: Prosecution action will be taken if a Nuisance Notice goes unheeded.

Note 4: Including certain cases against which prosecution was instituted before that year.

- End -