

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**EEB(F)067****(Question Serial No. 0667)**Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not specifiedProgramme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related ServicesControlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Donald NG)Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and EcologyQuestion:

In Programme (2), it is stated that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will abate environmental nuisances relating to dripping air-conditioners and water seepage. The problem of dripping air-conditioners is particularly severe in residential areas during summer, resulting in slippery floor that increases the risk of pedestrian slipping and infestation of mosquitos which affects public hygiene. Some residents said that the problem was not addressed in a timely manner despite repeated complaints to the relevant departments. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. How many complaints relating to dripping air-conditioners and water seepage did the Department receive in the past 3 years? How many cases were successfully dealt with? How many cases could not be successfully dealt with and what are the reasons?
2. What specific measures has the Department taken to enhance law enforcement? What are the details?
3. Has the Department carried out inspections in a proactive manner, and conducted regular reviews to follow up on the problem? Has the situation improved as a result?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Kin-por (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)Reply:

1. Statistics on the complaints relating to dripping air-conditioners received by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the relevant investigation work from 2022 to 2024 are as follows:

Item	2022	2023	2024
Number of complaints received	25 889	31 135	34 742
Number of Nuisance Notices issued ^{Note 1}	2 702	3 032	6 636
Number of prosecutions instituted ^{Note 2}	67	86	53
Number of convictions ^{Note 3}	48	61	96

Note 1: If the source of air-conditioner dripping is identified, a Nuisance Notice will be issued under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) to require the responsible person to abate the nuisance within a specified period.

Note 2: Prosecution action will be taken if a Nuisance Notice goes unheeded.

Note 3: Including certain cases against which prosecution was instituted before that year.

When handling complaints of dripping air-conditioners, FEHD officers have to visit the premises suspected of causing the nuisance for investigation. Some complaint cases may involve several suspected premises upstairs and require more time for investigation. If investigation cannot proceed right away due to the cooling weather, FEHD will re-open the case and continue with the investigation before the ensuing summer.

As regards water seepage in buildings, statistics on the cases received by the Joint Office (JO) which is set up by FEHD and the Buildings Department, as well as the cases with source of water seepage identified and the cases with source of water seepage not identified, from 2022 to 2024 are as follows:

Item	2022	2023	2024
Number of cases received	39 555	45 033	47 299
Number of cases with source of water seepage identified ^{Note 4}	5 186	5 669	5 080
Number of cases with source of water seepage not identified and water seepage continued ^{Note 4}	4 384	5 495	4 874

Note 4: The number of cases does not necessarily correspond to the number of cases received in the same year. Some of them are received before that year.

During water seepage investigation, JO will need to carry out non-destructive tests systematically at the premises suspected of causing the seepage so as to identify the source of seepage. However, water seepage investigation and tests are subject to various factors, for examples, moisture content of the seepage area, multiple sources of water seepage, characteristics of building materials, design and construction of building and pipe ducts, location of pipes/drains, whether the seepage area is blocked by other facilities, water consumption of the premises upstairs, whether the occupants of the premises suspected of causing the seepage cooperate with the investigation and tests, etc. All these factors will determine whether the source of water seepage can be identified. Besides, some cases require no further follow-up as water seepage ceases during the investigation.

2. & 3. The Government has adopted various measures in recent years to enhance its efforts in handling dripping air-conditioners and water seepage in buildings, which include the following:

- (1) To enable law enforcement officers to enter private premises to deal with public health nuisances such as dripping air-conditioners and water seepage in buildings, etc., the Environment and Ecology Bureau has introduced the Public Health and Municipal Services (Amendment) Bill 2024 (the Bill) into the Legislative Council (LegCo). The Bill recommends making it an offence for failing to comply with a notice of intended entry without reasonable excuse as well as increasing the penalty levels for non-compliance with the Nuisance

Notice and Nuisance Order, so as to ensure that public health nuisances are abated expeditiously. The Bill is currently under scrutiny by LegCo;

- (2) FEHD strives to promote the participation of property management agents (PMAs) of private estates in the hope of handling dripping air-conditioners and water seepage in buildings more effectively for members of the public. For instance, FEHD has launched the Scheme of Participation by Property Management Agents in Tackling Dripping Air-conditioners and the Scheme of Participation by Property Management Agents in Tackling Water Seepage in Residential Building. Under these schemes, staff of the participating PMAs, while performing routine management duties in the estate, will help identify the source of water dripping or water seepage and advise the occupants concerned to rectify the problem;
- (3) Making good use of technologies, FEHD will introduce video recorders with infrared night-vision function in all districts across the territory in 2025 to help officers identify the source of water dripping from air-conditioners during night time or under poor lighting environment;
- (4) In 2024, FEHD launched a pilot operation codenamed “CLEARSKY” in some districts to proactively enhance inspections to target buildings with dripping air-conditioners, complemented by education and publicity efforts. The operation has achieved significant results. This year, about 30 blackspots across the territory have been short-listed for enhanced law enforcement action using the approach of operation “CLEARSKY”. From May to September 2025, FEHD will carry out weekly inspections to these blackspots, during which law enforcement actions will be taken simultaneously against a number of premises with water dripping by visiting the buildings concerned, so as to mitigate the public nuisance caused by dripping air-conditioners;
- (5) JO will continue to optimise the workflow for handling water seepage cases to expedite investigation. The current procedure involves conducting Stage I investigation and Stage II initial investigation first, and only proceeding to Stage III professional investigation if the source of water seepage cannot be identified. JO has implemented a pilot to carry out in parallel Stage II and Stage III investigations in 6 pilot districts, namely Wong Tai Sin, North District, Yuen Long, Islands, Tai Po and Kwai Tsing. Under this arrangement, Stage III investigation can be carried out earlier without having to wait for the results of Stage II investigation, which aims to reduce the investigation time required for applicable cases. JO will review the effectiveness of the new investigation mode in the pilot districts so as to continuously optimise the relevant workflow; and
- (6) Since June 2018, JO has applied new testing technologies, such as infrared thermography and microwave tomography, in professional investigation in selected pilot districts where applicable. With the experience gained and data obtained in the pilot application, the use of these technologies was extended to 16 districts as at December 2024. Nevertheless, under special circumstances, such as small seepage area, spalling of ceiling concrete affected by water

seepage or blockage by tile finishes or other facilities (including suspended ceiling or pipes, etc.) on the ceiling, where the new technologies cannot be applied effectively, the outsourced consultants have to continue to employ the conventional testing methods.

JO will continue to use the new testing technologies effectively to identify the source of water seepage. Depending on the availability of relevant service providers in the market, JO will gradually extend the use of these technologies to the remaining districts.

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