

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**EEB(F)106**

**(Question Serial No. 1987)**

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 (Donald NG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

Among the indicators for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the number of prosecutions against food premises (including licensed and unlicensed ones) and the number of food business licences suspended/cancelled in 2024 recorded a relatively large drop from 2023. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- a) What is/are the reason(s) for the significant drop in the aforementioned number of prosecutions?
- b) What were the relevant prosecution figures in the past 5 years?
- c) It is mentioned under Matters Requiring Special Attention that the Department will continue to take stringent enforcement actions against unlicensed food premises and food premises which pose immediate health hazards or with illegal extension of food business areas. However, the actual number of prosecutions last year run against these measures. What is/are the reason(s)?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

- a) & c) As the licensing authority of food premises, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department exercises control through its licensing regime, inspections and enforcement actions to ensure that the premises comply with legal requirements and licensing conditions. In addition to regular inspections of licensed food premises, the Department conducts blitz operations in the light of actual circumstances and investigates complaints relating to food safety and environmental hygiene. If the Department finds anyone violating the law or any other irregularities, it will take enforcement actions.

The above enforcement work was carried out in 2024 and will continue to be performed this year. However, the actual number of prosecutions is contingent upon food premises' compliance. For example, one of the reasons for the drop in the number of prosecutions in 2024 was a decrease in cases of illegal extension of business areas by food premises. The Department hopes that with sustained

enforcement actions and other measures, the number of contraventions by food premises will further decrease.

- b) The numbers of prosecutions initiated by the Department against licensed and unlicensed food premises in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

<b>Year</b> <b>Number of prosecutions</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Licensed food premises</b>	3 129	3 090	3 152	2 546	1 588
<b>Unlicensed food premises*</b>	3 220	4 833	4 013	3 919	3 423

\*Note: The number of prosecutions against unlicensed food premises includes those initiated for operating an unlicensed food business and for contravening other ordinances by the unlicensed food premises.

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