

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**EEB(F)061**

**(Question Serial No. 2844)**

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:

With regard to the regulation of private columbaria, please advise this Committee of:

- i. the number of complaints related to private columbaria received by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the number of complaints with follow-up actions taken, and the number of complaints found substantiated (with a breakdown by type of complaints), in each of the past 5 years;
- ii. the top 10 licensed private columbaria that received the largest number of complaints, the number of niches of such columbaria, and the number of complaints involved (with a breakdown by type of complaints), in each of the past 5 years;
- iii. the numbers of advice made, warnings issued and enforcement actions taken by the Department against the substantiated complaints (with a breakdown by type of actions), in each of the past 5 years; and
- iv. the current staff establishment for handling relevant complaints and taking enforcement actions, and the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hoi-yam (LegCo internal reference no.: 47)

Reply:

- i. and iii. The number of complaints related to private columbaria received by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in each of the past 5 years and the follow-up actions taken are as follows:

Year	Number of complaints (All complaints have been followed up)	Number and type of complaints found substantiated	Follow-up actions taken against substantiated complaints
2021	79	0	N.A.
2022	63	1 (Typographical error in the Notice of Application for Specified Instrument)	The typographical error in the Notice of Application was corrected

Year	Number of complaints (All complaints have been followed up)	Number and type of complaints found substantiated	Follow-up actions taken against substantiated complaints
2023	49	0	N.A.
2024	76	0	N.A.
2025	49	0	N.A.

In addition to handling the above complaints, the Department conducted about 1 600 inspections of private columbaria over the past 5 years to monitor their operation and enforce the relevant requirements of the Private Columbaria Ordinance (the Ordinance). As a result of the inspections, the Department issued an enforcement notice to a licensed columbarium for installing 2 joss paper burners without approval. Upon receipt of the enforcement notice, the columbarium concerned complied with the requirements therein and removed the 2 burners.

- ii. The number and type of complaints involving private columbaria with a licence or an exemption in the past 5 years are as follows:

Year	Number of complaints	Number of columbaria involved	Type of complaints	Follow-up actions
2021	14	4	- Services and facilities of columbaria	The cases did not involve contravention of the Ordinance, and the columbaria concerned have already taken follow-up actions
2022	12	5	- Services and facilities of columbaria	
2023	4	4	- Services and facilities of columbaria	
2024	6	4	- Services and facilities of columbaria - Matters related to the interment of ashes - Matters related to the agreement for the sale of interment right	
2025	9	5	- Services and facilities of columbaria - Matters related to the interment of ashes	

According to the Department's investigation, all the above cases were unsubstantiated, did not involve contravention of the Ordinance, and were followed up by the columbaria concerned. It is considered inappropriate to disclose the names of the columbaria concerned.

- iv. The Private Columbaria Affairs Office of the Department comprises the Licensing Team, the Enforcement Team, the Financial Monitoring Team, the Private Columbaria Licensing Board Secretariat and the Administration Unit. As at

31 March 2026, the staff establishment of the Enforcement Team comprised 19 posts and the revised estimated expenditure was \$19.18 million.

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