

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)067

(Question Serial No. 1969)

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:

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will continue to improve the planning, provision and management of public toilets. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- (a) What were the costs of (i) maintaining the public toilet facilities, (ii) repairing the facilities, and (iii) conducting inspections to public toilets; and (iv) the number of frontline staff involved in each of the past 3 years?
- (b) What was the cost reduction achieved in routine public toilet management in the past 3 years with the promotion of the smart public toilet system by the Department?
- (c) Does the Department have any plan to expedite the progress of the facelifting projects in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public toilet management? If yes, what are the details? If no, what is/are the reason(s)?
- (d) While improving the management of public toilets, how does the Government ensure occupational safety and health of frontline cleaning workers in terms of the provision of ventilation systems, common rooms and protective equipment?
- (e) Are the cleaning workers required to attend any supplementary training upon the implementation of the smart public toilet system? If yes, please provide details of the training, resources allocation and manpower arrangement.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Wing-yan, Joephy (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

- (a) The daily routine management, inspections and repair and maintenance of public toilets are included in the street cleansing service contracts or the public toilet cleansing service contracts awarded for various districts as well as the repair and maintenance contracts of the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD). In addition, the management and inspection officers of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) are required to perform other environmental hygiene duties as well. Therefore, FEHD does not maintain information on items (a)(i) to (iii).

According to records, there were 965, 973 and 948 toilet attendants in 2023, 2024 and 2025 (as at December of that year) respectively.

- (b) FEHD has, in collaboration with EMSD, installed the Smart Public Toilet System in 15 public toilets to collect the daily operation data and monitor in real time the utilisation of these toilets, their environmental parameters, and the usage of consumables and electrical appliances. The toilet attendant or the contractor will be notified, through the Internet of Things technology, to take follow up actions. The main objective of the Smart Public Toilet System is to upgrade the overall service quality, hygiene standard and management efficiency of public toilets, rather than to reduce daily management costs. Therefore, FEHD has not compiled any quantitative statistics on the concrete savings in management costs achieved by the system.
- (c) Since the 2019-20 financial year, FEHD and ArchSD have actively taken forward the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme. As at 31 December 2025, full refurbishment or facelifting projects for around 480 public toilets had commenced as scheduled, which account for about 60% of the total number of FEHD's public toilets, while the works for over 200 public toilets had been completed. FEHD and ArchSD have been working closely in the programme and have conducted regular reviews on the progress of various projects. They strive to make advanced planning, streamline or compress the early-stage workflow as far as practicable, and adopt technologies such as the Modular Integrated Construction method and Design for Manufacture and Assembly in suitable projects as far as possible, with a view to shortening on-site construction time and the closure period of public toilets, enhancing construction efficiency and expediting works progress. ArchSD has also set up a dedicated team led by a Senior Property Services Manager to handle FEHD's projects. It provides professional advice and oversight on the management and implementation of the refurbishment or facelifting works for public toilets to ensure their efficiency and effectiveness.
- (d) FEHD will provide attendant rooms in public toilets with toilet attendant service if practicable. In an attendant room, equipment such as power sockets, lockers, electric fans, ventilation, lighting and fresh air supply will be provided. If no attendant room can be provided in a public toilet due to actual circumstances, the toilet attendants will be arranged to use the staff convenience facilities of a refuse collection point/roll-call point nearby or the solar cooling station set up outside. At present, all public toilets with toilet attendant service (approximately 280 in number) are provided with attendant rooms or rest areas.

As stipulated in the service contracts between FEHD and contractors, the contractor shall comply with all legislation in relation to the performance of the contract. Specifically, the Occupational Safety and Health Regulation (Cap. 509A) provides that employers have a duty to ensure the safety and health of their employees at work as far as practicable. It is also stipulated that contractors shall undertake to provide their employees with the necessary training (including occupational safety and health training in relation to the provision of the specified service) and to ensure that all employees, in performing the specified service, must wear clean and tidy uniforms or the special protective clothing as considered essential or appropriate by the Government, including face masks, plastic gloves and non-slippery rubber boots. Contractors are required to

provide their employees with such uniforms and special protective clothing and their replacements. FEHD has included in the public cleansing services contracts a clause that requires contractors to submit their supply and distribution plans of uniforms and special protective clothing for its approval. Contractors are also required to maintain a record of distribution of the items to each employee as well as the employees' signatures to acknowledge receipt of such items, which shall be produced for inspection upon the request of FEHD.

- (e) FEHD has, in collaboration with EMSD, offered training to workers and management staff of smart public toilets on how to use the system, including how to read the work reminders displayed as well as the data collected and analysed. The training does not incur additional resources and manpower.

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