

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)098

(Question Serial No. 0708)

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:

As some organisations reflected that individual outsourced cleansing service contractors have not provided frontline staff with the specified number of supplies and equipment according to the tender requirements, please advise this Committee:

- (1) of the number of inspections conducted by the Government on outsourced contractors in respect of the distribution of supplies and equipment to staff in each of the past 3 years and this year to date, and whether any performance indicator has been formulated for this purpose; if yes, the details; if no, the reasons;
- (2) of the respective numbers of verbal warnings, written warnings and default notices issued to the contractors, and the number of deductions of monthly payments for their failure in fulfilling their contractual obligations in respect of the distribution of supplies and equipment to staff in each of the past 3 years and this year to date;
- (3) whether the Government will consider requiring the contractors to provide frontline staff with a list of their monthly entitlement of supplies and equipment (including the numbers of uniforms and masks) in accordance with their tenders, and to post relevant information in workplaces for staff to check against; if yes, the details; if no, the reasons; and
- (4) whether the Government will consider establishing a unified mechanism for checking the distribution of supplies and equipment whereby the contractors are required to regularly submit a collection list signed by staff to acknowledge receipt, and surprise checks are conducted to ensure that the contractors have provided adequate supplies and equipment for their staff; if yes, the details; if no, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon LAM Chun-sing (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

- (1), (3) and (4) The contracts between the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and outsourced public cleansing service contractors stipulate that contractors shall provide frontline staff with adequate and appropriate uniforms, special protective clothing and equipment, and submit a uniform supply and distribution plan to the Department. Upon approval by the Department, the contractors shall, according to the contract terms, clearly display a list of

equipment (including the quantity of supplies for each rank, replacement frequency and photos of the items) as per the approved plan at the staff roll call points so that their staff are fully aware of their equipment entitlement. At the same time, a detailed record of distribution of the items to staff including their signatures to acknowledge receipt of such items shall be kept available for inspection by the Department at any time, so as to ensure that staff have properly received the equipment on the list.

As for monitoring and verification, the checking of equipment distribution has been included as part of the routine inspection work of contract management personnel of the Department. The Department has not kept a separate breakdown or formulated any performance indicators in this regard. In addition, the Department conducts surprise checks and meetings with the staff direct to inquire and verify whether the contractors have provided adequate equipment according to the contracts. To enhance labour protection, briefing sessions are held for workers upon the commencement of contract and annually thereafter to explain the details of uniform and equipment distribution, and a complaint hotline is in place for staff to reflect their views.

- (2) The Department will continuously review and strictly observe the aforesaid mechanisms. If a contractor is found to have breached the contract terms during inspection, random checking or complaint investigation, the Department will immediately follow up and take appropriate actions, including issuing verbal warnings, written warnings and default notices, and deducting monthly payments. According to records, in the past 3 years and this year to date, the Department has not identified any cases of non-compliance by contractors in respect of the distribution of staff equipment. As such, there have been no warnings or default notices issued and no monthly payments deducted.

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