

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**EEB(F)108**

**(Question Serial No. 0067)**

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:

Regarding applications for food business licences, please advise this Committee of the following:

- 1) What were the latest figures on various food business licences held in 2025? Please provide a breakdown by the 18 districts.
- 2) What were the respective numbers of new and approved applications for various food business licences and the average number of processing days in 2025?
- 3) In 2025, what were the respective numbers of applications and approved applications for renewal for various food business licences, and the numbers of food business licences expired without renewal or replaced after expiration?
- 4) The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will explore ways to streamline the requirements for and the processing of food business licence applications during 2026-27. For the plans and objectives of the work, will consideration be given to introducing more technological elements to further shorten the application processing time? If yes, what are the details? If no, what is/are the reason(s)?
- 5) What are the manpower and expenditure involved in processing various food business licences?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Chun, Jonathan (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

- 1) The number of each type of food business licences as at the end of 2025 is at Annex I.
- 2) The information sought is provided as follows:

Type of licence	Number of new applications <sup>Note 1</sup>	Number of approved new applications <sup>Note 2</sup>	Median processing time for an approved new application (working days) <sup>Note 2</sup>
General restaurant	895	722	181
Light refreshment restaurant	602	399	176
Marine restaurant	1	0	Not applicable
Bakery	5	2	198
Cold store	14	5	263
Factory canteen	26	14	564
Food factory	1 559	1 046	174
Temporary food factory	3 242	3 148	14
Fresh provision shop	384	218	152
Frozen confection factory	91	63	165
Milk factory	2	0	Not applicable
Siu mei and lo mei shop	43	32	174
Composite food shop	2	0	Not applicable

Note 1: The number of applications only includes applications received in the respective year.

Note 2: The number of approved applications includes applications received in the respective year and the years before.

The time lapsed between application submission and licence approval is contingent upon numerous factors, including the time taken for the applicant to submit supplementary documents and comply with the licensing requirements. Taking factory canteens as an example, among the cases approved in 2025, there was a case where the applicant did not submit the certificate of compliance for completing the process for obtaining a provisional licence until almost 2 years after the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department issued approval in principle. In another case, it took the applicant more than 1 year to submit to the Department the supporting documents for the waiver of lease conditions, thereby lengthening the overall processing time.

- 3) A full food business licence is valid for 12 months. In order to continue to operate food businesses upon the expiry of food business licences, licensees have to submit renewal applications to the Department. About 9 weeks prior to licence expiry, the Department's District Environmental Hygiene Office will issue a Notice of Renewal of Licence to the licensee. Upon submission of an application for renewal together with the required documents and payment of a prescribed fee, a renewed licence will be issued. The numbers of various food business licences renewed in 2025 are at Annex II.

For cases where the licence has not been renewed upon expiry, the Department will issue a letter to remind the licensees to complete the renewal application within 30 days, failing which the licence concerned will be cancelled. If the premises concerned

continue to operate after licence cancellation, they will be deemed as operating without a licence and prosecution will be instituted by the Department.

In 2025, there were a total of 1 321 cases where food business licences were cancelled due to expiry without renewal.

- 4) During 2026-27, the Department will sustain and enhance the measures for streamlining food business licensing implemented in recent years to further shorten the processing time and reduce business operating costs. In particular, the Department will explore the feasibility of streamlining the requirements for provisional licences to enable the operators to commence business as soon as possible. Moreover, the Department will actively look into the application of new technologies, such as using artificial intelligence to pre-screen applications, in order to enhance the processing efficiency.
- 5) In 2025, there were 133 staff members responsible for handling applications for food business and other trade licences in the 3 licensing offices of the Department. The Department does not maintain a breakdown of the manpower and expenditure involved in processing applications for various food business licences.

**Number of Each Type of Food Business Licences (as at the end of 2025)**

<b>Type of licence</b> <b>District</b>	<b>General restaurant</b>	<b>Light refreshment restaurant</b>	<b>Marine restaurant</b>	<b>Food factory</b>	<b>Fresh provision shop</b>	<b>Frozen confection factory</b>
Central and Western	1 198	616	0	610	127	20
Wan Chai	1 313	482	0	503	111	39
Eastern	704	218	4	784	212	32
Southern	263	74	1	384	96	26
Islands	345	181	0	296	72	20
Yau Tsim Mong	2 320	920	0	953	227	73
Sham Shui Po	722	254	0	646	190	23
Kowloon City	756	281	0	537	155	22
Wong Tai Sin	391	116	0	428	173	23
Kwun Tong	656	202	0	1 229	269	47
Kwai Tsing	413	135	0	1 117	176	44
Tsuen Wan	609	199	0	767	136	29
Tuen Mun	551	204	0	758	193	25
Yuen Long	777	263	0	686	260	28
North	305	81	0	274	95	12
Tai Po	323	114	0	310	114	12
Sha Tin	740	187	0	906	309	48
Sai Kung	461	139	0	362	181	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>12 847</b>	<b>4 666</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11 550</b>	<b>3 096</b>	<b>548</b>

**Number of Each Type of Food Business Licences (as at the end of 2025)**

<b>Type of licence</b> <b>District</b>	<b>Bakery</b>	<b>Cold store</b>	<b>Factory canteen</b>	<b>Milk factory</b>	<b>Siu mei and lo mei shop</b>	<b>Composite food shop</b>
Central and Western	20	0	0	0	15	0
Wan Chai	24	0	0	0	7	0
Eastern	27	0	18	0	25	0
Southern	11	2	10	0	10	0
Islands	11	4	7	0	8	0
Yau Tsim Mong	52	0	3	0	24	0
Sham Shui Po	29	0	42	0	29	0
Kowloon City	25	0	3	0	23	0
Wong Tai Sin	21	0	25	0	16	0
Kwun Tong	37	1	145	0	33	0
Kwai Tsing	35	37	66	0	30	0
Tsuen Wan	21	15	23	0	13	0
Tuen Mun	21	6	40	4	21	0
Yuen Long	25	7	9	3	31	0
North	14	5	9	1	16	0
Tai Po	11	2	5	0	15	0
Sha Tin	29	10	44	0	31	0
Sai Kung	16	0	4	0	22	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>0</b>

**Number of Each Type of Food Business Licences Renewed in 2025**

<b>Type of licence</b>	<b>Number of licences renewed</b>
General restaurant	11 821
Light refreshment restaurant	4 038
Marine restaurant	5
Food factory	10 110
Fresh provision shop	2 750
Frozen confection factory	483
Bakery	426
Cold store	88
Factory canteen	434
Milk factory	9
Siu mei and lo mei shop	344
Composite food shop	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 508</b>

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