

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**EEB(F)126**

**(Question Serial No. 3123)**

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 (FEHD) and the Buildings Department have set up the Joint Office for the investigation of water seepage cases in buildings. In this connection, please advise this Committee:

1. of the numbers of relevant complaint cases received, Warrants to Effect Entry into Premises applied to the court during investigation, water seepage cases in buildings with source of seepage identified and those with seepage source not identified, and prosecution cases for non-compliance with Nuisance Notices and Nuisance Orders in each of the past 3 years;
2. whether FEHD has proactively allocated resources to utilise new technologies to enhance the effectiveness of investigation and monitoring in the past 3 years; if yes, the details; if no, the reason(s); and
3. of the relevant staff establishment and expenditure in 2025-26. FEHD stated that it would implement a new workflow to enhance the inspection and testing procedures for handling water seepage problems. What are the estimated staff establishment and expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ming-sum, Michelle (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

1. Statistics on water seepage cases in buildings received and handled by the Joint Office (JO), which is set up by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Buildings Department (BD) for the investigation of water seepage cases in buildings, in each of the past 3 years are as follows:

<b>Number of cases</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Cases received	45 033	47 299	45 957
Cases with source of water seepage identified <sup>Note 1</sup>	5 669	5 080	5 326
Cases with source of water seepage not identified and water seepage continued <sup>Note 1</sup>	5 495	4 874	5 155
Warrants to Effect Entry into Premises applied to the court during investigation <sup>Notes 1, 2</sup>	67	23	21
Cases with prosecution instituted <sup>Notes 1, 3</sup>	174	163	153

Note 1: The number of cases does not necessarily correspond to the number of cases received in the same year. Some of them were received before that year.

Note 2: The court issued Warrants to Effect Entry into Premises for all the applications.

Note 3: Including prosecution cases for non-compliance with Nuisance Notices and Nuisance Orders.

2. To identify the source of water seepage more effectively, since June 2018, JO has applied inspection and testing technologies, including microwave tomography and infrared thermography, in professional investigation in selected pilot districts where applicable. Based on the experience gained and data obtained in the pilot application, JO has extended the use of such technologies to all districts across the territory since June 2025.
3. The staff establishment and revised estimated expenditure for 2025-26, and the staff establishment and estimated expenditure for 2026-27 of JO are as follows:

	2025-26	2026-27
<b>FEHD</b>		
Number of investigation and coordinating staff	252	252
Staff cost and departmental expenses (\$ million)	215.5 (Revised estimate)	225.2 (Estimate)
<b>BD</b>		
Number of professional and technical staff	102	102
Staff cost and departmental expenses (\$ million)	92.0 (Revised estimate)	92.0 (Estimate)
Expenditure for engaging outsourced consultants (\$ million)	56.0 (Revised estimate)	48.0 (Estimate)

JO will roll out a pilot scheme in 2026-27 to enhance the inspection and testing procedures for handling water seepage problems in buildings. Infrared thermography will be added in Stage I investigation to expedite the identification of the source of water seepage. If it is shown that the moisture content is higher than the specified level and there is reason to believe that water seepage is caused by the upper unit, a Notification Letter will be issued to the owner of the upper unit immediately, requesting inspection and repair on his part within a specified time frame. If water seepage persists after the deadline, JO will conduct investigation and may recover the costs of the tests during the investigation from the owner after confirming the source of water seepage. The

scheme aims to urge the owner of the upper unit causing the water seepage to carry out inspection and repair in a responsive manner so that the problem can be resolved promptly. At the same time, to streamline the procedures and increase efficiency, JO will carry out Stage II initial investigation and Stage III professional investigation in parallel for all applicable cases.

The manpower and expenditure for rolling out the pilot scheme is included in the estimated expenditure for 2026-27. As implementing the new workflow to enhance the inspection and testing procedures for handling water seepage problems is part of JO's overall duties in handling water seepage cases, JO cannot provide a breakdown of the manpower and expenditure specifically for the implementation of the new workflow.

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