

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB126

(Question Serial No. 0963)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Fire Service, (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding marine fire prevention strategies, please advise on the following:

- (a) How long does it generally take for fireboats and fire speedboats to arrive at various typhoon shelters or bays from their respective berths? (Set out the time in Annex 1 and put a slash “/” for areas beyond the respective service areas of the vessels.)

Typhoon shelter	Fireboat								Fire speedboat
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Aberdeen West Typhoon Shelter									
Aberdeen South Typhoon Shelter									
Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter									
Cheung Chau Typhoon Shelter									
Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter									
New Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter									
Sam Ka Tsuen Typhoon Shelter									
Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter									
To Kwa Wan Typhoon Shelter									
Tuen Mun Typhoon Shelter									
Yim Tin Tsai Typhoon Shelter									
Tai O									
River Trade Terminal (Tuen Mun)									
Chai Wan Public Cargo Working Area									
Cafeteria Beach, Tuen Mun									

- (b) What were the staff establishment and estimated expenditure involved in the fire prevention work for typhoon shelters in each of the past 3 years (from 2021-22 to 2023-24)?
- (c) What will be the staff establishment and estimated expenditure involved in the fire prevention work for typhoon shelters in 2024-25?

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

- (a) The estimated journey times (in minutes) generally required for fire vessels, including fireboats and fire speedboats, to arrive at various typhoon shelters or bays within their main service areas from their respective stand-by berths are set out in the table below[@]:

Typhoon shelter/Bay	Fireboat										Fire speedboat
	1	2*	3	4	5	6~	7^	8	10*	11#	
Aberdeen West Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	1.5	/	/	/	/	/	/	19
Aberdeen South Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	6	/	/	/	/	/	/	25
Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	8	/	/	12
Cheung Chau Typhoon Shelter	/	/	3	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	29
Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7	/	/	17
New Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter	20	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	3.5
Sam Ka Tsuen Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7	/	/	16
Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	8	/	/	16
To Kwa Wan Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	8	/	/	12
Tuen Mun Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	10	/	/	/	/	/	1
Yim Tin Tsai Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	15	10
Tai O	/	/	/	/	46	/	/	/	/	/	5
River Trade Terminal (Tuen Mun)	/	/	/	/	10	/	/	/	/	/	8
Chai Wan Public Cargo Working Area	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12	/	/	19
Cafeteria Beach, Tuen Mun	/	/	/	/	10	/	/	/	/	/	3

Note:

@ The actual time taken for a fire vessel to arrive at the scene of a marine fire is affected by various factors, for example, whether the vessel is engaged in other operations (including participation in regular navigation training, exercise and inspection, or handling other emergency incident, etc.) when the fire call is received, and the marine traffic, waves, currents, wind direction, visibility and so forth at the time of the incident. Generally speaking, when the Fire Services Department (FSD) receives a call of marine fire incident, it will deploy at least 2 fire vessels nearest to the incident scene for operation. In addition, on-shore fire stations in the vicinity will promptly deploy fire appliances to nearby piers, where on-shore fire personnel carrying portable fire pumps and other firefighting

equipment will board police launches or Marine Department vessels and head for the incident scene to provide support.

- * Fireboats No. 2 and No. 10 are reserve fireboats, which mainly serve as substitutes for fireboats under maintenance and repair. They therefore do not have specific service areas.
- ~ Fireboat No. 6 is deployed at Tsing Yi Fireboat Station and is responsible for waters near Tsing Yi and Ma Wan, including the oil terminals, oil tanker berths, dockyards, etc. in Tsing Yi District. The typhoon shelters and bays listed in the table above are not within its service area.
- ^ Fireboat No. 7 was put into service in mid-October 2020. It is currently berthed at Central Fireboat Station, alternating with Fireboat No. 1 to provide fire and rescue services to the Victoria Harbour and the areas of Hong Kong eastern waters.
- # Fireboat No. 11 was put into service in July 2023. It is currently berthed at Sai Kung Fireboat Base to provide fire and rescue services to the areas of Hong Kong eastern waters.

In addition, the FSD has 2 command boats and 8 speedboats stationed at the East and West Sea Rescue Berths of the airport. They are dedicated to handling incidents in the waters near the airport.

(b) & (c) The firefighting, rescue and fire prevention education work in respect of typhoon shelters is mainly taken up by the personnel responsible for marine matters under the Marine and Diving Division of the FSD, with support from personnel of fire stations near the typhoon shelters. The FSD does not maintain separate statistics on the expenditure for fire prevention work for typhoon shelters. The establishment of the disciplined grade staff responsible for marine matters under the Marine and Diving Division of the FSD from 2021-22 to 2023-24 and in 2024-25 (estimate) is tabulated as follows:

Rank Year (as at 31 March)	Establishment			
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (Estimate)
Senior Divisional Officer	1	1	1	1
Divisional Officer	2	2	2	2
Assistant Divisional Officer**	4	4	3	3
Senior Station Officer/Station Officer	15	15	15	15
Principal Fireman**	61	61	76	76
Senior Fireman**	84	84	92	92
Fireman**	141	141	179	179

** To cope with community development and further enhance operational efficiency, the FSD restructured some of its operational divisions in October 2023. As a result of manpower resources redeployment after the restructuring, the establishment of

the Marine and Diving Division has changed with the reduction of 1 Assistant Divisional Officer and the addition of 15 Principal Firemen, 8 Senior Firemen and 38 Firemen.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB129

(Question Serial No. 1288)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Please provide the number of calls involving fireboats in 2023 and the time taken for the fireboats to arrive at the fire scenes, with a breakdown by the following journey times: under 15 minutes, under 30 minutes, under 45 minutes, under 60 minutes and under 120 minutes.
2. Please tabulate the numbers of duty and maintenance hours for each fireboat in 2023.
3. Please list in the table below the fireboats budgeted for replacement starting from 2022 and their respective information.

Fireboat	Basic features (total length/ crew capacity/ speed)	Target time of replacement	Builder (if any)	Approved commitment

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

1. There were 2 400 calls involving fireboats in 2023 and the time taken for the fireboats to arrive at the scenes is tabulated as follows:

Journey time	Number of calls involving fireboats in 2023		
	Fire	Special service [Note]	Total
Under 15 minutes	74	337	411
15 to 29 minutes	58	354	412
30 to 44 minutes	40	242	282
45 to 59 minutes	22	112	134
60 to 119 minutes	25	123	148

More than 120 minutes	2	25	27
Call cancelled before arrival	164	822	986
Total	385	2 015	2 400

Note: Special service calls involve incidents other than fires, such as collision of vessels, ingress of water into vessels, gas leaks, rescue of people fallen into the sea, etc.

2. The fireboats perform duties, including attending vessel fires or rescue operations, undertaking regular drills, promoting public education on vessel fire prevention, conducting inspections and navigation training in the respective waters they serve or on standby duty, while not under regular maintenance inspection or repair. The maintenance time of each fireboat in 2023 is as follows:

Fireboat	Maintenance time (no. of days)
Fireboat No. 1	2*
Fireboat No. 2 [#]	146
Fireboat No. 3	103
Fireboat No. 4	80
Fireboat No. 5	0*
Fireboat No. 6	83
Fireboat No. 7	17*
Fireboat No. 8	266 [^]
Fireboat No. 10 [#]	28*
Fireboat No. 11 [@]	0
Command Boat No. 1	33
Command Boat No. 2	28

Fireboats No. 2 and No. 10 are reserve fireboats, which mainly serve as substitutes for fireboats under maintenance.

@ Fireboat No. 11 was put into service in July 2023.

* No major routine maintenance was required for Fireboats No. 1, No. 5, No. 7 and No. 10 in 2023. The Marine Department conducts regular interim-inspection on the condition of fireboats and arranges for regular routine maintenance accordingly.

^ Fireboat No. 8 required a major repair in early 2023 due to damage to the mechanical parts of its propulsion system.

3. The fireboats budgeted for replacement starting from 2022 that are yet to be delivered and their respective information are tabulated as follows:

	Basic features (total length/ crew capacity/ speed)	Time of replacement*	Builder (if any)	Approved commitment (\$million)

Acquisition of Fireboat No. 12	36-39 metres/ 12 persons/ 25 knots	Scheduled for delivery to Hong Kong in the second quarter of 2024	Lungteh Shipbuilding Co., Ltd.	125
Replacement of Fireboat No. 2	29-32 metres/ 7 persons/ 25 knots	Scheduled for delivery to Hong Kong in the third quarter of 2024	Jianglong Shipbuilding Co., Ltd.	97.5
Replacement of Command Boat No. 1	34-36 metres/ 8 persons/ 35 knots	Scheduled for delivery to Hong Kong in the third quarter of 2024	Afai Southern Shipyard (Panyu Guangzhou) Ltd.	120
Replacement of Command Boat No. 2	34-36 metres/ 8 persons/ 35 knots	Scheduled for delivery to Hong Kong in the fourth quarter of 2024	Afai Southern Shipyard (Panyu Guangzhou) Ltd.	120

* The actual time for the new vessels to put into service depends on factors including, among others, the acceptance and performance tests upon completion of construction.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB128

(Question Serial No. 1687)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Among the indicators, the estimated number of inspections of fire service installations (FSIs) and equipment for 2024 is only 259 050, which represents a decrease of over 20 000 inspections compared to the previous 2 years. In addition, the number of applications for approval of portable firefighting equipment and FSI/equipment processed in 2023 decreased by nearly half compared to 2022. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

- a) the reasons for the Fire Services Department (FSD)'s estimated decrease in the number of inspections of FSIs and equipment;
- b) the statistics on inspection of FSIs and equipment conducted by the FSD in the past 5 years;
- c) the reasons for resulting in this number of applications for approval of portable firefighting equipment and FSI/equipment processed; and
- d) the statistics on the number of applications for approval of portable firefighting equipment and FSI/equipment processed by the FSD in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

- a) and b) To ensure that the fire service installations (FSIs) and equipment installed in buildings conform with the relevant standards and are in efficient working order at all times, the Fire Services Department (FSD) conducts inspections of these FSIs and equipment. The number of inspections of FSIs and equipment conducted by the FSD in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of inspections of FSIs and equipment conducted by the FSD	239 780	210 036	260 275	282 138	282 842

The FSD's estimate for the number of inspections of FSIs and equipment in 2024 (259 050) is lower than the actual numbers in 2022 and 2023. This is subject to a basket of factors, including the market demand for acceptance inspection of FSIs and equipment for new buildings and major infrastructures, the number of inspections required by the FSD in response to complaints about FSIs and equipment, and the number of inspections of FSIs and equipment in buildings and premises conducted by the FSD in respect of the Certificate of Fire Service Installation and Equipment [note], etc. In fact, the FSD's estimate for the number of inspections of FSIs and equipment in 2024 has increased by about 13% when compared to the estimate for 2023 (230 150).

Note: Pursuant to the requirements under regulation 8 of the Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) Regulations (Cap. 95B), the owner of any FSI/equipment shall keep such FSI/equipment in efficient working order at all times and have such FSI inspected by a registered FSI contractor (registered contractor) at least once in every 12 months. Upon the installation, maintenance, repair or inspection of FSI/equipment in any premises, the registered contractor shall issue to the FSI/equipment owner or the person commissioning the registered contractor a certificate (i.e. the Certificate of Fire Service Installation and Equipment) and forward a copy to the FSD. The inspection results, i.e. whether or not the FSI/equipment is in efficient working order, shall be stated in the certificate.

- c) and d) FSIs and equipment to be installed for the protection of buildings must be accepted by the FSD. In addition, all portable equipment must be approved by the Director of Fire Services before it can be supplied or sold in Hong Kong. The number of applications for approval of portable firefighting equipment and acceptance of FSI/equipment (the applications) processed by the FSD in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of applications processed by the FSD	340	530	355	717	390

In general, the number of applications processed by the FSD is subject to the applications for approval or acceptance submitted by the trade. The main reason for the higher number of applications processed by the FSD in 2022 when compared to 2023 (see the table above) is that more such applications were received by the FSD in 2022.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB127

(Question Serial No. 2595)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (-) Not specified

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The establishment ceiling for 2024-25 will rise by 142 posts from an estimated 11 509 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 to 11 651 posts as at 31 March 2025. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the establishment of the relevant posts to be created, with a breakdown by their respective responsibilities and the average expenditure on annual salary to be involved?

Asked by: Hon KONG Yuk-foon, Doreen (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

The Fire Services Department (FSD) estimates that there will be a net increase of 142 posts in 2024-25, involving an expenditure of about \$110 million on annual salary. The posts to be created are detailed as follows:

Item	Scope of Work	Rank	No. of posts
1	To provide manpower for the Airport East Fire Station, the Chek Lap Kok North Fire Station and the Chek Lap Kok North Ambulance Depot for the Three-Runway System (3RS) of the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) which will soon be put into operation	Assistant Divisional Officer	4
		Principal Fireman	22
		Senior Fireman	23
		Fireman	65
		Senior Station Officer/Station Officer (Control)	4
		Principal Fireman (Control)	4
		Senior Fireman (Control)	11
	Ambulance Officer	1	
2	To provide manpower for the fire station-cum-ambulance depot in Area 72, Tseung Kwan O which will soon be put into operation	Senior Divisional Officer	1
		Divisional Officer	1
		Assistant Divisional Officer	1
		Senior Station Officer/Station Officer	8
		Principal Fireman	4

Item	Scope of Work	Rank	No. of posts
		Senior Fireman	11
		Fireman	38
		Senior Ambulance Officer	1
		Ambulance Officer	1
		Principal Ambulanceman (upgraded from Senior Ambulanceman)	5
		Senior Ambulanceman	18
		Ambulanceman	37
3	To cope with the surge in on-site acceptance inspections before the commissioning of the 3RS of the HKIA in 2024	Building Services Inspector	7*
		Assistant Building Services Inspector	7*
4	To cope with the FSD's manpower requirement arising from the implementation of measures to enhance the fire safety of old buildings, such measures include the implementation of the defaulted works mechanism and the establishment of the FSD Building Improvement Support Centre	Divisional Officer	1
		Assistant Divisional Officer	3
		Senior Station Officer/Station Officer	5
		Principal Technical Officer	1
		Senior Building Services Inspector	1
5	To cope with the FSD's manpower requirement arising from the enhancement of emergency response capabilities in various aspects (including firefighting, rescue, handling of hazardous materials incidents and emergency ambulance service) and the relevant planning work, etc. for the National Games	Senior Divisional Officer	1#
		Divisional Officer	1#
		Assistant Divisional Officer	1#
		Senior Station Officer/Station Officer	1#
		Senior Station Officer/Station Officer (Control)	1#
		Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer	1#
		Senior Ambulance Officer	1#
		Ambulance Officer	1#
Executive Officer II	1#		
6	To establish the Greater Bay Area (GBA) Partnerships and External Affairs Office for strengthening collaboration with other GBA cities and implementing the GBA Emergency Response and Rescue Operational Plan	Divisional Officer	1
		Principal Fireman	1
		Senior Ambulance Officer	1

Item	Scope of Work	Rank	No. of posts
7	To cope with the increased workload related to recruitment and appointment matters	Executive Officer I	1
Sub-total			298
Deletion of posts			(101)
Deletion of the expired time-limited posts			(55)
Total			142

* Time-limited posts until 31 December 2024

Time-limited posts until 31 December 2025

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB130

(Question Serial No. 2789)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

What are the specific details of the Fire Services Department's community education programme on promoting cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in 2024-25? Does the Department have plans to further encourage and promote the wider installation of AEDs on the premises of more trade and industrial organisations as well as owners' corporations? If yes, what are the details of the plans; if no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 2)

Reply:

The Fire Services Department (FSD) will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach to promote to the community cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). The details are as follows:

- Organising the "Press to shock - Save a life" CPR & AED Course to teach members of the public the knowledge and skills of performing CPR and using an AED;
- Imparting to secondary and tertiary students the basic knowledge of CPR through the CPR Training Programme in Campus. In addition, the FSD plans to further collaborate with various secondary schools to provide students with hands-on experience in performing CPR and using an AED in class, thereby raising their awareness to immediately perform CPR and use an AED in an emergency, and boosting their confidence to perform rescue when encountering a cardiac arrest patient;
- Reaching out to members of public of different age groups through various publicity and promotion platforms (such as social media, advertisements, press briefings and carnivals, etc.), along with slogans like "The fully automated AED is for anyone to use without training" and "AED Accessible, Life-saving Possible" to spread the message that "Anyone can use an AED" to different sectors of society;

- Continuing to tap the synergy of the “Resuscitation Alliance” formed in June 2023 with other organisations dedicated to the promotion of CPR and AED, to strengthen the promotional and educational efforts in respect of CPR and AED through working with various sectors of the community;
- Organising thematic promotional activities and/or workshops jointly with various organisations to amplify promotional effectiveness and enable more people from different backgrounds and trades to understand that it takes only a few simple steps to perform CPR and use an AED; and
- Commending members of the public who had come forward to save a life, using their personal experiences to convey the message that anyone can save a life by CPR and AED during an emergency.

Currently, there are about 2 700 publicly accessible AEDs registered on the FSD’s online information platform, Centralized AED Registry for Emergency (CARE). The FSD will continue to seek collaboration with more organisations and agencies to expand AED coverage. Major measures are as follows:

- Launching the “AED Everywhere” programme to encourage more organisations and agencies to install publicly accessible AEDs and register these AEDs on the CARE platform for the public’s immediate retrieval and use in a cardiac arrest case. Three franchised bus companies were the first to join the programme in early 2024, with a plan to install a total of 70 AEDs at some of the bus regulators’ kiosks in the first phase. In the future, more organisations and agencies will be invited to participate in the programme and install more AEDs in the community;
- Organising the “Heartful Organisation” Awards Ceremony to commend organisations and agencies which have rendered active support for the promotion and installation of AEDs for public use, thereby encouraging more trade and industrial organisations and various industries to follow the example of the award winners by installing more AEDs at various locations in the community to fulfil their social responsibilities; and
- Continuing the collaboration with the Property Management Services Authority to promote AED-related information to property management companies and practitioners, and encourage property management companies to install more AEDs for the properties and premises under their management, benefitting more members of the public and residents.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB131

(Question Serial No. 2790)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

What was the wastage rate of ambulanceman at each rank in the Fire Services Department (FSD) in 2023-24? What was the number of unfilled vacancies under the approved establishment of ambulanceman at each rank? What was the amount of overtime allowance for ambulanceman at each rank?

What was the replacement progress of town ambulances to be phased out by the FSD in 2023-24? What was the overall fault rate of the FSD's ambulances, and what was its impact on the day-to-day dispatch of ambulances?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

The wastage of personnel at each rank of the Ambulanceman grade in the Fire Services Department (FSD) in 2023-24 is tabulated below:

Rank	Principal Ambulanceman	Senior Ambulanceman	Ambulanceman
Establishment*	301	822	2 032
Wastage*	24	17	89

* As at 29 February 2024

The number of vacancies not yet filled under the establishment of ambulanceman at each rank in the FSD is tabulated below:

Rank	Principal Ambulanceman	Senior Ambulanceman	Ambulanceman
Vacancy*	5	38	54

* As at 29 February 2024

With the substantial increase in ambulance calls following the resumption of normality in the society, the FSD has arranged for its personnel to work overtime to meet the demand of

emergency ambulance calls. The amount of Disciplined Services Overtime Allowance for personnel at each rank of the Ambulanceman grade in the FSD in 2023-24 is tabulated below:

Rank	Principal Ambulanceman	Senior Ambulanceman	Ambulanceman
Amount of Disciplined Services Overtime Allowance (\$million)*	6.2	26.8	48.6

* As at 29 February 2024

To maintain the age of ambulances at a healthy level and to ensure the overall reliability of the fleet, the FSD has formulated an ambulance replacement plan (Plan). The FSD has completed the replacement of 53 town ambulances in 2023-24 according to the above-mentioned Plan.

Apart from replacing ambulances according to the Plan, the FSD also consistently monitors the efficiency of ambulance maintenance with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD). Besides, the EMSD replaces the parts of the ambulances on a regular basis to ensure the reliability of the fleet. Additionally, in case of breakdown of an ambulance, the FSD will immediately refer the case to the EMSD for inspection and follow-up repairs. The FSD will also dispatch reserved ambulances to the units concerned for operational use to avoid affecting the dispatch and operation of ambulances.

In 2023-24 (as at 1 March 2024), the number of cases which FSD ambulances required factory repairs (including corrective repairs, accident repairs, and preventive maintenance carried out 3 times a year for each ambulance) was 1 850.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB186

(Question Serial No. 3547)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding hill fire prevention, would the Department inform this Committee of the following:

Hill fires occur from time to time in Hong Kong's extensive country parks, and the situation could be dire should the fires spread. What are the measures that the Department has in place to prevent hill fires and the annual expenditure involved? What publicity and education programmes does the Department have to explain the hazards and the importance of hill fire prevention to the public?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 68)

Reply:

The Fire Services Department (FSD) has been taking multi-pronged measures to prevent hill fires. In terms of hill fires prevention operations, the FSD deploys additional manpower and equipment to divisions with a relatively high number of hill fires during Ching Ming Festival and Chung Yeung Festival, which is the peak period for hill fires in the year, to handle the anticipated higher-than-usual occurrence of hill fire incidents, and sets up Forward Command Post to facilitate the monitoring and deployment of appropriate resources for fighting fires.

In terms of publicity and education, the FSD promotes and enhances public awareness of the danger of and prevention of hill fire through various channels, and steps up its publicity and education efforts during Ching Ming Festival and Chung Yeung Festival when the number of hill fires is relatively high. Such work includes:

Promotion through Television and Radio

Announcements in the public interest (APIs) are broadcasted on television and radio channels as well as the Housing Department's Housing Channel for the public to learn about hill fire hazards and the importance of hill fire prevention through media that are familiar to them.

Poster Display

Various hill fire prevention posters are produced and displayed at fire stations/ambulance depots, community halls/community centres of the Home Affairs Department, public housing

estates and poster sites managed by the Information Services Department to promote the message of hill fire prevention.

Banner Display

Hill fire prevention banners are displayed at prominent locations of rural areas in the New Territories to raise public awareness of hill fire prevention.

Promotion through Partners

Links to APIs on hill fire prevention are sent to over 500 social welfare organisations through partnership with The Hong Kong Council of Social Service to ensure that the message of hill fire prevention can reach the wider community.

Promotion through Social Media

Posts about hill fire prevention are released timely through the FSD's various official social media channels, leveraging their extensive coverage to spread important messages.

On-site Leaflet Distribution

Hill fire prevention leaflets are distributed by the FSD personnel, in collaboration with the local community (including members of District Fire Safety Committees, Fire Safety Ambassador Honorary Presidents and Fire Safety Ambassadors) to grave sweepers in places where crowds gather (such as country parks, MTR stations, bus stops and cemeteries) during Ching Ming Festival and Chung Yeung Festival to disseminate the message of hill fire prevention to the members of public.

The FSD has, on an ongoing basis, allocated resources to reduce fire hazards in Hong Kong and organised various fire safety publicity activities to strengthen public awareness of fire safety and prevention. The FSD does not maintain a separate breakdown of the expenditure involved in hill fire prevention work since fire prevention is part of its work.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB188

(Question Serial No. 3626)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In 2016, a no. 4 alarm fire broke out at a mini-storage in Ngau Tau Kok. The Fire Services Department (FSD) later accepted the recommendations made by the Coroner's Court to initiate inspections and law enforcement actions in Mini-storage Premises across the territory for the sake of their fire safety. Would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. To the FSD's knowledge, what is the current number of Mini-storage Premises across the territory?
2. What were the numbers of Mini-storage Premises inspected and inspections per Mini-storage Premises conducted by the FSD in each of the past 3 years?
3. What was the total number of common fire hazards in Mini-storage Premises identified by the FSD during the inspections in each of the past 3 years?
4. In relation to the above question, what were the top 3 common hazards and the respective percentages they accounted for in the total number of common fire hazards in Mini-storage Premises identified by the FSD each year?
5. What was the number of Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHANs) issued to Mini-storage Premises operators by the FSD in each of the past 3 years?
6. What was the number of prosecutions against Mini-storage Premises operators for failing to abate fire hazards within the time frames specified in the FHANs in each of the past 3 years?
7. The recommendations made by the Coroner's Court earlier included the conducting of a comprehensive review of the internal messaging transmission mechanism of the FSD, which was then followed up by a dedicated committee of the Department. What is the current implementation progress of the recommendations?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 138)

Reply:

1. Mini-storage Premises may operate in various modes. Those containing cluster(s) of lockers or storage cubicles allowing direct access for the public to store and retrieve articles are Target Mini-storage Premises. According to the records of the Fire Services Department (FSD) as at 29 February 2024, there was a total of 706 Target Mini-storage Premises in operation in Hong Kong.

2. to 6.

The figures related to the inspections of Target Mini-storage Premises conducted by the FSD in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

	2021	2022	2023
Number of Target Mini-storage Premises inspected by the FSD	189	204	358
Number of fire hazards identified by the FSD during the inspections of Target Mini-storage Premises	82	127	103
Number of Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHANs) issued to Target Mini-storage Premises operators by the FSD	82	127	103
Number of prosecutions against Target Mini-storage Premises operators for failing to abate fire hazards within the timeframe specified in the FHANs	21	144	109

The FSD does not maintain separate statistics on the number of inspections per Target Mini-storage Premises each year.

In addition, the top 3 common fire hazards identified by the FSD during inspections of Target Mini-storage Premises and the respective percentages they accounted for in the total number of fire hazards identified during those inspections in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

Common fire hazards identified	2021	2022	2023
Undesirable arrangement of storage cubicles	32.9%	30.7%	35.0%
Obstruction / insufficient number of windows	22.0%	33.1%	31.1%
Insufficient exit signs and directional signs	18.3%	17.3%	14.6%

7. The FSD has set up a dedicated committee to comprehensively follow up on the recommendations made by the Coroner's Court and has implemented relevant measures, including improvement of internal messaging dissemination mechanism to ensure more effective dissemination of important messages.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB189****(Question Serial No. 3765)**Head: (45) Fire Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (000) Operational ExpensesProgramme: (3) Ambulance ServiceControlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Please provide the following figures:

1. The number of ambulance service calls from the Mainland for conveying patients from boundary control points in the past year (please give a breakdown of the number of calls by control point);
2. The shortest, longest and average time required for all completed cases in the past year;
3. The overall expenditure on ambulance service calls from the Mainland for conveying patients from boundary control points in the past year.

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)Reply:

Under normal circumstances, upon receipt of a call for emergency ambulance services, the Fire Services Department (FSD) will dispatch ambulance(s) in accordance with the established arrangements to convey patient(s) from the Hong Kong ports of land boundary control points to a nearby Accident and Emergency Department under the Hospital Authority to receive the services required.

1. The number of calls for emergency ambulance services handled by the FSD at Hong Kong ports of various land boundary control points in 2023 is tabulated as follows:

Hong Kong port of land boundary control point	Number of calls
Lok Ma Chau	394
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	595
Lo Wu	1 193
Shenzhen Bay	1 332
Man Kam To	255
Sha Tau Kok	1

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	436
Heung Yuen Wai	256
Express Rail Link West Kowloon	406
Total	4 868

2. The FSD does not maintain relevant statistics of the time that the FSD required for handling the above-mentioned emergency ambulance services.
3. The FSD's revised estimated expenditure on overall ambulance service for 2023-24 is about \$2.77 billion. The FSD does not keep separate statistics of the expenditure involved in the handling of cases of emergency ambulance calls at Hong Kong ports of land boundary control points.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB187

(Question Serial No. 3782)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is stated in the Programme that the Fire Services Department (FSD) will formulate a mechanism and pursue the legislative work for the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (FS(B)O) for empowering the FSD and the Buildings Department (BD) to carry out fire safety improvement works for owners of old composite and domestic buildings who have failed to comply with the relevant requirements and to recover the related fees from them afterwards, as well as to explore the strategy to improve the fire safety of those old buildings. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. The final numbers of applicant buildings, applications approved, and the expenditure involved in the third round of the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme (FSWS) which was open for application from 1 April 2023. What is the total amount of subsidies disbursed so far in respect of the provision of \$2 billion?
2. The numbers of applications, improvement works completed, works yet to be completed, and extension applications under the FSWS since its inception, with a breakdown by 18 districts in table form.
3. The direction of the proposed amendments to the FS(B)O, the legislative timetable, and the estimated yearly number of fire safety works to be carried out by the FSD and the BD after the enactment of the Ordinance.

Asked by: Hon CHENG Wing-shun, Vincent (LegCo internal reference no.: 70)

Reply:

1. To assist owners of old buildings in complying with the requirements of the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) ("the Ordinance"), the Government, in partnership with the Urban Renewal Authority ("URA"), implemented a \$2-billion Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme ("FSWS") in 2018, providing subsidies for carrying out fire safety improvement works. Subsequently, the Government increased the funding for the FSWS to a total of \$5.5 billion. In 2018 and 2020, the URA rolled

out 2 rounds of applications. Since then, the URA launched the third round of application from April to September 2023 to assist more owners in need to enhance the fire safety standard of their buildings.

There were 2 249 and 734 applications meeting the basic application requirements in the first and second rounds of the FSWS applications respectively. The URA issued letters of Approval-in-principle” (“AIP”) to the applicants of the above 2 983 applications, and contacted them about the commencement of fire safety improvement works. For the third round, the URA received 1 307 applications meeting the basic application requirements. The URA is processing the applications and will issue to the applicants AIP in due course. On the amount of subsidy, as at 29 February 2024, the URA disbursed about \$72 million to the owners of 162 buildings.

In accordance with the estimated cash flow requirements of the FSWS, the Government disbursed \$650 million of funding to the URA in 2023-24 and plans to disburse \$780 million of funding to the URA in 2024-25.

2. According to the URA’s information as at 29 February 2024, the number of applications issued with AIP in the first and second rounds and the progress of works by District Council district are set out in the following table:

District Council district	Number of applications issued with AIP	Number of applications with works in progress	Number of applications with works completed
Central and Western	325	316	9
Wan Chai	243	222	21
Eastern	200	197	3
Southern	76	70	6
Yau Tsim Mong	746	716	30
Sham Shui Po	453	433	20
Kowloon City	291	278	13
Wong Tai Sin	102	99	3
Kwun Tong	67	67	0
Tsuen Wan	131	126	5
Tuen Mun	35	35	0
Yuen Long	155	153	2
North	22	21	1
Tai Po	66	66	0
Sai Kung	3	3	0
Sha Tin	25	23	2
Islands	4	4	0
Kwai Tsing	39	38	1
Total	2 983	2 867	116

An applicant under the FSWS shall carry out fire safety improvement works in accordance with the schedule stipulated in the AIP. If the applicant fails to comply

with the required schedule, he/she may apply to the URA for an extension. The URA does not keep separate statistics on such information.

The number of applications meeting the basic application requirements in the third round by District Council district is tabulated as follows:

District Council district	Number of applications meeting the basic application requirements
Central and Western	175
Wan Chai	124
Eastern	111
Southern	24
Yau Tsim Mong	269
Sham Shui Po	176
Kowloon City	148
Wong Tai Sin	37
Kwun Tong	31
Tsuen Wan	58
Tuen Mun	21
Yuen Long	48
North	12
Tai Po	26
Sai Kung	3
Sha Tin	12
Islands	0
Kwai Tsing	32
Total	1 307

As mentioned above, the URA is processing the third round applications and will issue to the applicants AIP in due course.

3. The Government has been proactively providing various kinds of support to owners of old buildings (including support on financial, coordination among owners as well as technical aspects) with a view to assisting them in carrying out fire safety improvement works. Nevertheless, some owners, in particular those of “three-nil” buildings, may still have difficulties in complying with the requirements of the Ordinance due to the lack of coordination capability. In order to further upgrade the fire safety standards of old buildings, the Government has proposed to amend the Ordinance, and by improving the existing legal framework through legislative amendments with reference to the Buildings Department’s (“BD”) experiences in the work of building safety and the similar mechanism under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123), to empower the enforcement authorities, i.e. the BD and the Fire Services Department, to carry out fire safety improvement works (“defaulted works”) for owners of target buildings who have failed to comply with the requirements of the Ordinance, and to recover the relevant fees from such owners upon completion of the works.

The Government listened to the views of the Panel on Security of the Legislative Council (“the Panel”) on the proposed amendments to the Ordinance in September 2021 and July 2022 respectively, and launched a ten-week public consultation exercise on 5 July 2022. Overall, the comments we received are generally in support of the Government’s proposal. The Government also briefed the Panel on 5 December last year on the proposals regarding the amendments to the Ordinance and the defaulted works mechanism, etc. At present, the Government is stepping up the drafting work of the proposed amendment bill, with the target of submitting it to the Legislative Council for scrutiny in 2024.

It is the responsibility of owners to timely repair and properly maintain private buildings, including carrying out the required fire safety improvement works to enhance the fire safety standards thereof according to the Ordinance. Subject to relevant factors such as the effective use of public funds and government resources, the trade’s capacity and willingness to undertake the works, as well as not compromising the principle that owners are obligated to timely repair and properly maintain their private buildings, the Government would only, under exceptional circumstances, carry out defaulted works for target buildings that fail to comply with the requirements of the Ordinance, so that owners of target buildings in genuine need will be able to obtain assistance from the Government. It is estimated that defaulted works could be carried out for about 20 to 60 target buildings every year.

- End -