

**Bills Committee on
Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Bill 2005**

**Administration's response to issues raised
at the Bills Committee meeting on 10 June**

Hong Kong's smoke-free restaurants

PURPOSE

This paper provides information on smoke-free restaurants in Hong Kong.

MEMBERS' QUESTION

2. At the above meeting, Members requested for more detailed information about smoke-free restaurants in Hong Kong.

ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE

3. Since its establishment under the Department of Health in 2001, the Tobacco Control Office (TCO) has targeted statutory no smoking areas as its major visiting groups and proactively reached out to some of these establishments to promote anti-smoking messages.

4. In the course of these visits, TCO understands that some restaurants have adopted, on a voluntary basis, a no-smoking policy in their restaurant premises. A list of smoke-free restaurants is thus compiled so that the public can be better informed of the location of smoke-free restaurants when they wish to patronize these restaurants. The number of such restaurants has risen from about 700 in 2002 to 800 in 2004.

5. These restaurants include Western, Chinese and Japanese restaurants, café, and fast food chain stores, etc. In addition, the restaurants are scattered in all 18 districts in the territory.

INTERVIEWS WITH RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT

6. In order to better understand the operational circumstances of these restaurants after going smoke-free, TCO staff had conducted interviews in 2003 and 2004 with persons-in-charge of several of these restaurants. Below are extracts of some of the statements made by the interviewees:

“Customers had a totally afresh feeling when all our stores went smoke-free. They could now enjoy an eating environment that is of higher quality and more comfortable. Our clientele has thus been broadened, attracting more family and white-collared customers. The response has been very positive since the ban and there has indeed been an increase in our businesses.”

- Senior Vice-President of a fast food chain store

“Smokefree restaurants are good deeds! Hygienic, clean and tidy. Customers would be happy to come consume, while employees could work in a relatively comfortable state.”

- Owner of a noodle shop

“It is an irresistible trend for restaurants to go smokefree. It is good to be able to aggregate customers who enjoy an eating environment with fresh air while for employees, not having to intake secondhand smoke would be healthier. I believe that if all restaurants premises turn into smokefree, there should not be any decrease in business.”

-Chairman of a South Asian food chain store

7. Some other have spoken along similar lines but they have not shown details of their business volumes to us. In order to better assess the situation of these restaurants, TCO has planned to solicit more information from the 800 restaurants after going smokefree. We are prepared to report our findings when the results are available.

LIST OF SMOKE-FREE RESTAURANTS AVAILABLE ON INTERNET

8. TCO is now maintaining a list of smoke-free restaurants, which has been made available to the public on its website at <http://www.tco.gov.hk>.

ADVICE SOUGHT

9. The Bills Committee is invited to note the Administration’s response.