

**Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in
examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10**

**Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Session No. : 17**

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
S-LWB(L)01	S063	IP Wai-ming	90	Safety and Health at Work
S-LWB(L)02	S064	IP Wai-ming	90	Labour Relations
S-LWB(L)03	S065	IP Wai-ming	90	Employment Services
S-LWB(L)04	S066	PAN Pey-chyou	90	Employment Services
S-LWB(L)05	S067	PAN Pey-chyou	90	Employment Services
S-LWB(L)06	S068	WONG Kwok-hing	90	Safety and Health at Work
S-LWB(L)07	S069	WONG Kwok-hing	90	Employee Rights and Benefits

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-LWB(L)01

Question Serial No.

S063

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Why do the efforts to prevent workers from heat stroke at work not include conducting a study on legislative protection?

Asked by : Hon. IP Wai-ming

Reply :

Apart from regulating specific workplaces and processes which are more risky in nature, the existing occupational safety and health legislation is also designed to have the flexibility to cover different work activities and environment for the general protection of the safety and health of workers, including the protection of workers from heat stroke at work. There is therefore no plan to introduce specific legislation for the prevention of heat stroke at work. The need for relevant research studies is, however, kept under constant review to ensure that risks to the safety and health of people at work are properly managed.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

30.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-LWB(L)02

Question Serial No.

S064

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Though experience shows that most of the claimants have left their employment when they approach the Labour Relations Division (LRD) for assistance, there are still workers who have expressed the need for seeking assistance on Saturdays. Will the Administration consider recruiting more staff for introducing the arrangement of shift duty on Saturdays?

Asked by : Hon. IP Wai-ming

Reply :

At present, the Labour Department (LD) has put in place an effective system to deliver round-the-clock enquiry and information service on Employment Ordinance and labour matters through its 24-hour telephone enquiry service and LD's homepage. The LRD offices of LD should be able to cater for the need of claim registration on weekdays since the vast majority of claimants have already left employment. LRD will also provide urgent conciliation service on weekends and holidays for labour disputes which require immediate attention.

Notwithstanding the above, we will keep our mode of delivery of service to the public under constant review. Currently, we have no plan to introduce the arrangement of shift duty on Saturdays in the branch offices of LRD.

Signature

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Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

30.3.2009

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SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-LWB(L)03

Question Serial No.

S065

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Under the Transport Support Scheme (TSS), what are the reasons for the smaller number of applicants in North District?

Asked by : Hon. IP Wai-ming

Reply :

We have no information on the personal asset values of residents by district, hence we do not have exact figures on the number of persons eligible to join TSS by district. Nevertheless, we note from the findings of the General Household Survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department in 2007 that the numbers of unemployed persons and low-income employees residing in North District were substantially lower than the corresponding figures for Yuen Long and Tuen Mun. This may be one of the reasons for the smaller number of TSS applicants in North District.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	30.3.2009

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
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Reply Serial No.

S-LWB(L)04

Question Serial No.

S066

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the nine Contract Programme Officer positions and six Contract Clerk positions to be created for the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP), the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS), the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM) and the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme, what are the job details and the contract period?

Asked by : Hon. PAN Pey-chyou

Reply :

Of the positions to be created for enhancing and integrating the various employment programmes administered by the Labour Department, nine Contract Programme Officer positions and six Contract Clerk positions will be created for two years to strengthen the provision of employment assistance to job seekers and, in particular, to implement the enhanced EPM and the revamped YPTP and YWETS. Of the 15 additional positions, one will be assigned to each of the 12 Job Centres. Under the enhanced EPM, they will take up case processing duties, including vetting of vacancies, verification of claims and disbursement of allowances. They will also assist in scrutinising applications, conducting site inspections and investigating complaints. Under the revamped YPTP and YWETS, they will mainly be responsible for liaison with employers for training vacancies, follow-up with trainees on placement positions, and processing of claims for training subsidies and off-the-job training allowances.

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Reply Serial No.

S-LWB(L)05

Question Serial No.

S067

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the 16 Contract Programme Officer positions to be created in the next two years for the job fairs, what are the job details and the contract period?

Asked by : Hon. PAN Pey-chyou

Reply :

Sixteen Contract Programme Officer positions will be created for two years to provide more proactive employment assistance to employees who lost their jobs in large-scale redundancy and closure exercises amidst the financial crisis. Of these, 12 Contract Programme Officers will be posted to the 12 Job Centres of the Labour Department to strengthen the provision of employment assistance and job matching services with a view to helping the retrenched employees find suitable jobs as soon as possible. The remaining four Contract Programme Officers will assist in canvassing vacancies from employers and organising thematic job fairs targeted at hard-hit industries and district-based job fairs at shopping centres and community halls to reach out to job seekers for the dissemination of vacancy and employment information.

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

It is mentioned in the reply to the Question Serial No. 0857 that an occupational disease is a disease having a specific or strong relationship with exposure to physical, chemical, biological or psychosocial factors in the workplace.

- (a) What are the psychosocial factors that would cause the related diseases?
- (b) Many employees are at present engaged in clerical work under great stress, but the occupational diseases caused by psychosocial factors are not covered under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance. What are the reasons for the Administration not to provide funding for such research?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

- (a) Occupational disease refers to a disease having a specific or strong relationship with exposure to factors in the work environment that are predominant and essential in causing the disease. These factors may include physical, chemical, biological or psychosocial factors. However, while strong medical evidence has established a causal relationship between specific physical, chemical or biological factors with particular occupations, there is no conclusive medical evidence so far revealing such a relationship between any psychosocial factor with any occupation.
- (b) Stress is a subjective feeling that one perceives when external demands exceed what one can handle within individual ability and resources. A multitude of factors such as personality, life events, family harmony, interpersonal relationship with friends and relatives, work practice and environment, and relationship with colleagues etc may cause stress. Work may therefore interplay with many other factors in causing stress. So far, there is no strong medical evidence to indicate that work stress is a predominant and essential factor in causing any disease. The Labour Department will continue to monitor local and overseas large-scale studies from time to time to examine if there is a firm basis to support the designation of new types of occupational diseases arising from work stress.

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Reply Serial No.

S-LWB(L)07

Question Serial No.

S069

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Referring to the reply to Question Serial No. 1666 (CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy) –

- (a) No illegal workers in the Financing, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services industries were arrested in 2007, while 35 people were arrested in 2008. What were the specific jobs of these 35 illegal workers?
- (b) The number of illegal workers in the Community, Social and Personal Services industries arrested in 2008 had increased by almost 100% to 136. What jobs were they mainly engaged in? What were the reasons for such a huge increase?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

Referring to the reply to Question Serial No. 1666

- (a) In 2008, 35 suspected illegal workers were arrested in the Financing, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services industries. Of these, 32 assisted the street retailers to set up their stalls, two worked as shopkeepers in money exchange shops and one was engaged by an employment agency as an assistant.
- (b) As for the 136 suspected illegal workers arrested in the Community, Social and Personal Services industries in 2008, they were mainly engaged as general workers in repair and waste handling companies, shop assistants in sanitary and laundry shops, masseurs, beauticians, hair washers, stylists and care home attendants. The increase in the number of suspected illegal workers arrested in 2008 in these industries was due to the increase in the number of joint operations mounted by the Labour Department together with the Immigration Department and the Police targeting at establishments in such industries.

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