



水務署  
Water Supplies Department

APPENDIX 19

本署檔案 Our Ref.: (4) in WSD TC 10/2011 (Pt. 9)

來函檔號 Your Ref.: CB(4)/PAC/R57

20 December 2011

(By fax 2840 0716)

Ms Lily SZE  
Clerk, Public Accounts Committee  
Legislative Council

Dear Ms SZE

**The Director of Audit's Report on the  
results of value for money audits (Report No. 57)**

**Water losses from unauthorised consumption and  
inaccurate metering (Chapter 12)**

I refer to your letter of 15 December 2011 requesting for further supplementary information arising from the Public Accounts Committee's public hearing on 1 December 2011.

I have the pleasure to provide the required information as follows.

- (a) *of the inspections of suspected cases of unauthorised water consumption conducted by the Prosecution Unit from 2008 to 2010 as set out in Table 4 in paragraph 3.3 of the Director of Audit's Report ("the Audit Report"), the respective numbers and percentages of those inspections which were conducted by two staff together in each of the three years;*

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Collection of evidence during investigation requires simultaneous actions at different locations, for example operating valves at ground floor and taps within the premises to ascertain that water is drawn through the illegal connection to the premises, and at least two and very often three staff members are deployed for the investigation.

In each of the three years from 2008 to 2010, all such inspections were conducted with at least two staff members.

- (b) *in Case 2 (in paragraph 2.24(b) of the Audit Report), the Owners' Corporation ("OC") admitted in January 2008 taking fresh water unlawfully for flushing for about 28 months and was convicted of the offences in April 2008. Please advise whether the Prosecution Unit had informed the court of the above period of unlawful water taking (i.e. 28 months) and the related water charges that should be recovered; if it had not, what the reasons were; and*

In case 2, the Prosecution Unit did inform the Magistrate that the period of unlawfully taking of fresh water was 840 days, that is about 28 months. A water charge of HK\$ 69,622 for the concerned period was recovered as mentioned in paragraph 4 of the case summary in the Audit Report.

- (c) *regarding the Audit recommendation on conducting periodic reviews of the meter replacement strategies for 15-mm and large meters with reference to good overseas practices (in paragraph 4.34(a) of the Audit's Report), what actions the Water Supplies Department will take in response to the recommendation, and whether and how it will make use of data mining techniques to facilitate the replacement work.*

Drawing on the overseas experience and best practices, the WSD considers that the most effective strategy for improving meter accuracies is to implement regular meter replacement programmes and the optimal replacement cycles for small (15mm) meters, medium size (25 to 100mm) meters and large size (150 to 300mm) meters are now set as 12 years, 7 years and 4 years respectively. The WSD will periodically review the optimal replacement cycles of the meters based on statistical test data.

On top of these time-driven replacement cycles, the WSD will conduct review to develop cumulative flow volume-driven replacement criteria for replacement of meters to further improve on the overall accuracy of the meters. Data mining techniques would be useful for searching the meters reaching the set cumulative flow volume from the meter fleet for replacement.

Yours sincerely



( L T MA )  
Director of Water Supplies

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