

[Translation]

香港特別行政區政府

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

運輸及房屋局

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27 May 2016

Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung  
Room 1017, Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Dr Hon CHEUNG,

**Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2016-17**

(Question Serial No: R107 – R113)

I refer to the above questions which you raised during the examination of the estimates of expenditure for 2016-17 regarding the Housing Department (HD)'s cleansing service contracts<sup>1</sup>. Our reply is as follows.

**Cleansing workers work-related injury cases**

For public housing estates managed by the Housing Department (HD), HD maintains statistics on injuries sustained by cleansing workers of cleansing service contracts since 2013. There were 61, 90 and 46 cases in 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively. Most of the cases involved "Injured whilst lifting or carrying" and "Slip, trip or fall on same level".

In the past five years, there were four reported cases of work-related injury in connection with cleansing workers employed by cleansing service contractors in the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) Headquarters (one in 2012, one in 2013 and two in 2015). These cases involved fall, hit injury and bee-stung.

<sup>1</sup> The Hong Kong Housing Authority's Customer Service Centre, commercial properties and some public housing estates are managed by outsourced contractors. The contracts include various management services, including cleansing services. This reply does not cover these contracts.

Upon receiving the work-related injury reports, HD had reminded the cleansing service contractors to report the incidents to the Labour Department and thoroughly examined the relevant locations. Having regard to the possible causes of the incidents, HD had also requested the cleansing service contractors to implement improvement measures, including enhancing staff training on occupational safety, with a view to preventing recurrence of the incidents. In addition, HD will impose contract regulatory actions against under-performed contractors, which include deduction of contractor's scores upon quarterly performance appraisals, restriction from tendering, or even removal from the Contractor List.

### **Requirements under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance**

For public housing estates managed by HD, all cleansing service contractors are required under contract to obtain accreditation under the Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSAS) 18001, and provide a Safety Officer to supervise the safety measures of the cleansing services. Estate Manager will meet with and listen to the report from the Safety Officer with respect to the handling of occupational health and safety related issues at least once monthly.

The cleansing service contract for HA Headquarters has stipulated that the contractor must fully comply with the statutory and contractual provisions for the protection of cleansing workers, including the provision of safety equipment and training on occupational safety and health. The contractor shall also ensure that cleansing workers have sufficient experience, training and skills to perform their duties. Two officers in HA Headquarters, viz the Building Security Officer and Assistant Building Security Officer, are responsible for monitoring the contractor's compliance with occupational safety and health requirements through routine inspections and communication with the cleansing workers, daily briefings with the contractor, monthly cleansing management meetings, quarterly performance assessment as well as surprise inspections outside office hours.

### **Non-compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance**

For public housing estates managed by HD, HD does not maintain records on suspected non-compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance by cleansing service contractors. However, contractors are required under contracts to report to the Estate Manager in writing in the event of

employee injury. HD will impose regulatory actions against under-performed contractors, which include deduction of contractor's score upon quarterly performance appraisals, restriction from tendering, or even removal from the Contractor List.

As far as HA Headquarters is concerned, there was no case of suspected non-compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance by its outsourced cleansing service contractors in the past five years. The cleansing service contract for HA Headquarters has stipulated that the contractor must fully comply with the statutory and contractual provisions for the protection of cleansing workers. In case there is suspected non-compliance with the statutory requirements, HD will report the incident to the relevant authority for action. In addition, depending on the seriousness of the non-compliance, HD may issue warning letters to the contractor or terminate the contract as appropriate in accordance with the contract terms.

#### **Number of workers, types and terms of HD's Cleansing Service Contractors in 2015**

For public housing estates managed by HD, in 2015, cleansing service contractors of HD had a total number of about 2 200 employees, including cleansing supervisors, foremen and workers. Based on 6-day week and 8 daily work hours, their average monthly salaries were around \$10,500, \$9,400 and \$8,100 respectively.

As for HA Headquarters, the cleansing service contractors had 61 employees in 2015. Their types of work, monthly salaries and working hours are summarised in the table below:

<b>Types of work</b>	<b>Monthly salary</b>	<b>Working hours per week</b>
1. Cleansing Supervisor	\$12,600	54 hours (6-day week)
2. Cleansing Foreman	\$12,300	54 hours (6-day week)
3. Full-time Cleansing Worker	\$8,600 or \$9,250	45 hours (5-day week) or 54 hours (6-day week)
4. Part-time Cleansing Worker	\$1,900 to \$2,020	10 hours (5-day week)

Contractors must enter into employment contracts with their employees, and act pursuant to the Employment Ordinance as well as employment contracts in the arrangement of rest days for their employees.

### **Minimum Staffing Requirements for Cleansing Services Contracts**

Depending on actual circumstances of the estates, HD will specify the requirement on minimum daily work hours in the cleansing service contract. HD staff will oversee compliance of relevant contractual requirement by the contractor through conducting daily patrol, regular meetings, surprise checks, attendance record checks, etc.

Regarding the cleansing contract for HA Headquarters, HD has stipulated the service requirements in the cleansing service contract mainly in terms of service specifications and the required frequency for each type of service. For example, daily office litter removal and vacuum cleaning, monthly floor wax-polishing, quarterly cleansing of building external walls, etc. The existing arrangements and mechanism for monitoring the cleansing service contractor have been effective and are subject to regular review.

### **Occupational Safety Training, Protective Equipment, Ancillary Tools, Changing Facilities and Refreshment provided by Cleansing Service Contractors**

For public housing estates managed by HD, cleansing service contractors are required under the contract with HD to provide trainings on "Occupational Safety Knowledge" and "Handling of Occupational Safety Equipment" annually, and to provide protective equipment and ancillary tools (e.g. gloves, non-slip shoes, safety belts, masks, reflective vests, helmets, protective clothing, goggles, earflaps) for their employees. Contractors must also have an office cum rest room on lease within the estate. Safety Officer of the contractors should report to the Estate Manager with regards to the handling of occupational health and safety issues at least once monthly.

The cleansing service contract for HA Headquarters has stipulated that the contractor must fully comply with the statutory and contractual provisions for the protection of cleansing workers, including the provision of safety equipment and training on occupational safety and health. The contractor shall also ensure that cleansing workers have sufficient experience, training and skills to perform their duties. Changing facilities and drinking water are available in HA

Headquarters for the cleansing workers. Two officers in HA Headquarters, viz the Building Security Officer and Assistant Building Security Officer, are responsible for monitoring the contractor's compliance with the occupational safety and health requirements through routine inspections, daily briefings with the contractor, monthly cleansing management meetings, quarterly performance assessments as well as surprise inspections outside office hours.

There was no case of suspected non-compliance with cleansing contract requirements in the past five years.

Yours sincerely,

( Original Signed )

(Jerry CHEUNG)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

**c.c.**

Clerk to the Legislative Council Finance Committee (Attn: Mr Daniel SIN)  
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Attn: Ms Emily TSANG)