

**For discussion
on 16 March 2000**

**LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs
Subcommittee on matters relating to environmental hygiene**

**Provision of Environmental Hygiene Services and Facilities
by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department**

PURPOSE

To apprise Members of the work of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) relating to the provision of environmental hygiene services and facilities.

BACKGROUND

2. Our mission is to ensure that food is fit for human consumption, hygienic and safe and to maintain a clean and hygienic living environment for the people of Hong Kong. We have an establishment of 16,030 staff. A booklet on the organization of the FEHD and its services is in **Annex I**.

ORGANIZATION

3. The FEHD delivers its services through three branches :

- **Food and Public Health Branch**

The Branch is responsible for food surveillance and certification, veterinary inspection and management of food incidents, assessment of risk on food and dissemination of food safety information.

- **Environmental Hygiene Branch**

The Branch is responsible for the implementation and coordination of environmental hygiene services, management of public markets, hawker control and licensing matters. The licensing of food business and other trades and meat inspection also fall under this Branch.

- **Administration and Development Branch**

The Branch is responsible for departmental administration, including human resources management, financial management, planning and implementation of capital works projects, information technology, public information and education.

ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

4. We provide a full range of environmental hygiene services and facilities to the community. These include street sweeping and cleansing, household waste collection, desludging, management and maintenance of refuse collection points (RCPs), public toilets, public markets and cooked food centres, public crematoria and columbaria, control of hawkers, licensing of slaughterhouses and food premises. Details are at **Annex II**. We would like to highlight our work in these areas as follows:-

Public Cleansing & Environmental Hygiene

- (i) We are committed to providing efficient and effective public cleansing services. We have a workforce of about 7,000 to deliver street sweeping and washing, refuse collection and other specialized cleansing services.
- (ii) Street sweeping service is provided at least once everyday to as many as eight times a day in busy areas. About one third of our street cleansing services are provided by cleansing contractors engaged by the Department.
- (iii) We provide about 17,000 litter containers, 410 dog excreta collection bins and 1,090 RCPs throughout the territory. All newly built RCPs are equipped with water scrubber systems, vehicle exhaust extraction systems and high pressure water jet cleaners.
- (iv) We have 322 refuse collection teams which collect over 6,000 tonnes of household waste a day from public housing estates, private residential developments and RCPs.
- (v) All the 283 public toilets and 597 aqua privies (ie village dry toilets in remote areas where public sewerage system is not available) are open 24 hours daily. 159 toilets with high usage rate (ie used by over 500 persons a day) are serviced by toilet attendants during peak hours. All toilets are

cleansed by cleansing contractors at least twice daily.

- (vi) Pest control work, such as control of rodents, mosquitoes and other arthropod pests with public health significance, is carried out by our pest control staff. We also carry out systematic surveys, trappings, poisoning and elimination of breeding places to maintain an hygienic environment.
- (vii) We conduct regular inspections to tackle sanitary nuisances which include refuse blackspots, choked or defective plumbing systems, water dripping from air-conditioners and water seepage. Members of the public may report such nuisances to our district staff or through the hotline. Abatement of sanitary nuisances are dealt with under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, Cap. 132 to occupiers/owners concerned.

Market Management (including cooked food markets and centres)

- (viii) We are responsible for managing 82 public markets and 25 free standing cooked food centres which have about 16,000 stalls. We aim at maintaining a clean and hygienic environment in these markets. Cleansing work of most of these markets is now done by contractors under our supervision.

Hawker Control

- (ix) At present, there are about 9,500 licensed hawkers who ply their trade in fixed pitches, hawker permitted places and bazaars. We inspect the hawker fixed pitches, permitted places and bazaars on a regular basis.
- (x) Illegal hawking activities create environmental nuisances and cause obstructions. We therefore control on-street hawking activities in order to reduce illegal hawking and nuisances created by street trading through enforcement action.

Cemeteries and Crematoria

- (xi) We provide an efficient and dignified burial or cremation service for the deceased. It is government's policy to promote cremation and we now operate six crematoria and columbaria. We handle about 25,000 cremations a year and provide reasonably priced niches in columbaria for the storage of cremated ashes.

- (xii) We also manage nine public cemeteries. Burials in these cemeteries are not permanent, and are exhumed after six years. After exhumation, the remains are either cremated or reburied in an urn grave.

Licensing of slaughterhouses and food premises

- (xiii) We are responsible for licensing slaughterhouses and food premises. At present, there are three licensed slaughterhouses and about 14,000 licensed food premises including over 8,500 restaurants, 2,400 food factories and 2,900 fresh provision shops. To safeguard public health, Health Inspectors regularly inspect these licensed premises and take stringent law enforcement action against unlicensed and unhygienic food premises.

5. Performance pledges for our environmental hygiene services are set out in **Annex III**. We will assess our performance against these targets on a regular basis and revise them to meet the rising community expectations.

Monitoring of our work at the district level

6. The Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene has personally attended all 18 District Council meetings to brief members of the work of the department and to enlist District Council's co-operation to advise and monitor our work performance. We have submitted to all District Councils a comprehensive report on the environmental hygiene facilities and services for each respective district with highlights of the EH problems peculiar to the district. Regular reports on progress of work will be submitted to District Councils on the relevant Committees as appropriate.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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