

**For discussion
on 2 June**

Legco Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Team Clean

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the short-term and longer-term measures contained in the Interim Report on Measures to Improve Environmental Hygiene in Hong Kong, unveiled by the Chief Secretary on 28 May in LegCo.

THE MEASURES

2. The improvement initiatives are structured according to a hierarchy of personal hygiene, home hygiene and community hygiene. Special emphasis is put on the 'zero tolerance' of spitting and littering offences as well as on raising public awareness and instilling a sense of civic responsibility. We are also putting special attention on the common areas and facilities of both private and public housing, to ensure that their hygiene is well-maintained. Attention is also paid to hygiene in restaurants, markets and cooked food stalls, with an immediate crackdown on illegal food hawking and stricter enforcement of food and hygiene regulations in markets and bazaars.

3. Details of the measures are set out in the paragraphs to follow -

Short-term Phase I Measures

Personal Hygiene.

- ‘Zero tolerance’ and strict enforcement of spitting and littering offences; fixed penalty for spitting and littering to increase from \$600 to \$1,500.
- Enhanced public education on hygiene standards for new immigrants, domestic helpers, tourists and members of the public.

Home Hygiene

- Inspection of external drainpipes in private buildings from May to July. Repair orders to be issued for defective pipes.
- Cleansing of common areas of more than 800 old, unhygienic private buildings from now until December.
- Collection of domestic bagged refuse in old districts from June to December.
- Increased enforcement action, coupled with streamlined procedures, against dripping air conditioners.
- Inspection of external drainpipes in public housing estates from June to August, with half-yearly inspections thereafter.
- Cleansing of more than 250 hygiene blackspots in 99 public housing estates from now to August.
- Clearing of excessive rubbish, and enhanced rubbish collection services, in public housing estates.
- Quarterly cleansing operations in public housing estates from May.
- Launch of ‘Public Housing Estate Cleanliness Incentive Scheme’ and ‘Estate Commercial Premises Cleanliness Scheme’ in June.
- Establishment of a 24-hour hotline to allow public housing estate residents to report hygiene blackspots and drainage defects.
- Stringent action against illegal cooked food hawkers in public housing estates from June.

Community Hygiene

- Cleansing of private rear lanes and streets by the government. Costs to be recovered by the government for subsequent cleansing operations if owners cannot maintain proper hygiene standards.
- Launching of six pilot projects to develop a system for inter-departmental co-operation for cleaning district hygiene blackspots.
- Stepped up enforcement of food and hygiene laws at restaurants, with particular attention paid to cleanliness, food preparation, delivery and display, and toilet hygiene.
- Stricter enforcement of laws requiring shop owners/tenants to keep pavements clean.
- Strengthened enforcement against the dirtying of rear lanes and other filthy private areas.
- Stringent enforcement of food and hygiene laws at markets and cooked food centres.
- Promulgate guidelines on handling of food at food stalls and cooked food centres.
- Intensive cleaning by the government of common areas at cooked food centres from July to December.
- Stepped up efforts to prevent dengue fever by eliminating mosquito breeding sites in or at housing estates, commercial premises, construction sites, hiking trails, recreation venues and drainage ditches.
- Add a 'shine' to the city through a major cleanup of roads and streets, hawker areas, street furniture; more regular repainting of footbridges and flyovers, road markings; replacement of old, dirty or withered roadside greenery; improve landscapes at amenity areas and leisure venues.

Longer-term Phase II measures

Personal Hygiene

- Consider harsher laws (e.g. community service orders, criminal record) and eviction from public housing for repeated breaches of hygiene laws.
- Erecting a facility to commemorate SARS victims, as well as those who die in the service of others.
- Hygiene and civic education courses to become an integral part of the school curriculum.
- Sustain efforts to raise awareness of hygiene laws and regulations among new immigrants, domestic helpers and members of the public.

Home Hygiene

- Review the Buildings Ordinance to improve drainage system design.
- Inspection, and repair if necessary, of internal pipes in public housing estates.
- Consider suggestions for mandatory management of domestic buildings.
- Amend laws to facilitate rectification of air conditioner dripping nuisance.
- Pursue with professional institutes ways to improve urban and building design.
- Ongoing raids against illegal cooked food hawkers in public housing estates.

Community Hygiene

- Joint efforts with NGOs to help owners/residents keep rear lanes and private streets clean.
- Assist local community groups/residents to monitor hygiene conditions of rear lanes and private streets.

- Amend laws to increase penalties for despoiling rear lanes and private areas.
- Consider publishing the names of restaurants with unhygienic kitchens and toilets.
- Encourage restaurant owners to refurbish toilets and consider making hygienic toilets a critical factor in renewal of licences.
- Designate a day in the end of each month as an ‘Intensive Cleanup Day’. Rubbish points would be set up as necessary to allow residents to dispose of rubbish and disused articles.
- Consider whether a ban on live poultry should be imposed to tackle the root of the Avian Flu problem.

IMPLEMENTATION

4. The district administration system will play a key and pro-active role in monitoring local conditions and devising new initiatives to engender a sense of individual responsibility and collective community pride in environmental hygiene.

5. We aim to complete majority of the Phase I short-term measures before end of July 2003. Longer term measures will be developed on the basis of experience gained in Phase I. We aim to produce a final report in August.

ADVICE SOUGHT

6. Members are invited to give their views on the short-term improvement measures and the longer-term issues to be examined.

Team Clean
Chief Secretary for Administration’s Office
30 May 2003