

For discussion

On 22 October 2002

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme

PURPOSE

This paper serves to brief Members on -

- (a) the Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD); and
- (b) the features of new generation toilets.

BACKGROUND

2. Standard of provision and cleanliness of public toilets play a part in shaping citizens' and visitors' view of the environmental hygiene of Hong Kong. Since its establishment in January 2000, FEHD has implemented a Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme to give a new look to public toilets with enhancement in design and facilities. Priority is given to toilets that are aged or with high daily usage or at tourist spots.

THE PUBLIC TOILET REFURBISHMENT PROGRAMME

3. There are about 300 public toilets under the management of FEHD. The number of public toilets covered by the Programme in the past three years and in the coming year is as follows -

| <u>Refurbishment Programme</u> | <u>No. of toilets refurbished/to be refurbished</u> |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2000-01 | 43 |
| 2001-02 | 64 |
| 2002-03 | 60 |

4. All the 43 toilets in the 2000-01 Programme were refurbished. Of the 64 toilets in the 2001-02 Programme, 32 projects have been completed and refurbishment works in the remaining 32 would be completed soon. Upgrading of about 60 toilets has been scheduled for the 2002-03 Programme and a target of around 50 projects has been set for 2003-04. If this rate of upgrading is maintained, all public toilets managed by FEHD would be refurbished by 2006.

STANDARD FEATURES FOR NEW ENHANCED TOILETS

5. For the enhancement programme, we have taken into account aesthetic appeal, functional usage and maintenance of the toilets. Major features of new generation toilets are as follows -

Outlook/Colour Scheme

- (a) Bright colour scheme is used for external and internal walls to create a pleasant environment and project a clean image for public toilets. Colourful artworks and mural paintings are used for internal or external walls in some of these public toilets.

Internal design and fitting-out

- (b) *Cubicles* : Both pedestal and squatting types of water closets are provided. In squatting types, hand-grip rails are installed on both sides of the cubicle to assist users to straighten up, in particular the elderly. Coat hook, toilet paper holder, small rack and wall-mounted sanitary disposal are provided.
- (c) *Urinals* : Urinal bowls with modesty boards are provided to give more privacy. Hand-grip railing is installed at one of the urinal bowls or part of the urinal trough. A children-height urinal bowl would be provided where practicable.
- (d) *Hand washing* : “Corian” is used in the manufacture of wash-hand basins and vanity benches. A wash hand basin at children-

height level would be provided as far as practicable. Automatic infra-red sensor water tap, which is more hygienic, convenient and effective in saving water consumption, is a standard provision for all toilets under the improvement scheme. Soap dispensers and electric hand dryers are also installed.

- (e) *Lighting* : Full length mirror is installed to create a more spacious feeling. Decorative lighting for mirror such as light trough with downlight is installed over each wash-hand basin to generate a welcoming environment. Sky light and light reflection panels are introduced whenever possible to bring in natural lighting in order to save energy and create a softer environment. Decorative feature lighting is included to enhance illumination to the external elevation of the toilet.
- (f) *Floor* : Coloured and large floor tiles which are non-slippery, non-water absorbent and easy for cleaning are used.
- (g) *Other facilities* : Litter bins and baby changing counter are standard provision in the communal area.

Ventilation and Odour Control

- (h) Large size opening and fixed louver system or raised roofing design are adopted as far as practicable.
- (i) Odour source oriented air exhaust fans are installed in each toilet compartment for even air change and immediate odour removal.
- (j) Mechanical fresh air in-take system at bottom of the wash-hand basin counter is installed for better ventilation and prevention of wet floors.
- (k) Oscillating fans are standard provision in the communal area to facilitate air circulation.

Toilet for People with a Disability

- (l) A special cubicle easily accessible is provided for people with a disability.
- (m) An emergency alarm bell is provided in the cubicle for enlisting emergency assistance.

Other Special Features

- (n) Illuminated signage and composite information signs which are aesthetically-designed are provided. Inspection record box is installed to facilitate the monitoring of public toilet facilities.
- (o) Planters at the external walls of public toilets and indoor potted plants are provided to produce a conducive atmosphere and to create an ideal image.

USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

6. FEHD is also trying out the use of new technology in some of the refurbishment projects.

(a) Valve-type and Sensor-type Flushing System

The advantages of the flushing valves are that full-bore flow can be produced almost instantaneously upon actuation of the flushing and that a smaller volume of flushing water is used, thus reducing water consumption. Over 20 toilets in the 2001-02 Programme have been identified for installing the new device.

To provide a more convenient and hygienic flushing system to the public, the feasibility of using sensors as actuation devices for flushing apparatus is being explored. A pilot scheme will be carried out in the Pokfulam Road Public toilet.

(b) Anti-bacteria Wall and Floor Tiles

Joints of the conventional tiles paving may easily absorb and retain urine and hence become the breeding ground for bacteria and a source of odour. To reduce the problem, large anti-bacteria wall and floor tiles will be/have been provided in 15 public toilets on a trial basis.

OTHER IMPROVEMENT ASPECTS

7. In addition to the upgrading of hardware, FEHD also aims to improve the standard of cleansing service provided to public toilets. In 2002-03, FEHD provides full-time toilet attendant services to over 230 public toilets territory-wide with a daily usage of more than 200 and provides all public toilets under its purview with toilet paper. This series of enhanced public toilet services is a part of FEHD's initiatives in support of the Clean Hong Kong Programme.

ADVICE SOUGHT

8. Members are invited to comment on the above Programme.

**Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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