



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局  
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat  
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
The People's Republic of China

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23 September 2016

Ms Josephine SO  
Clerk to Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms So,

**LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene  
Follow-up to Meeting on 12 January 2016**

**Private Columbaria Bill: Anticipated issues that must be handled at the initial stage of the implementation of the regime under the Ordinance**

When the captioned subject was discussed at the meeting of the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene (the Panel) on 12 January 2016, Members enquired about details of the temporary storage of ashes in Government facilities and the supply of new niches by religious bodies and non-governmental organisations. The information requested is provided below.

*Temporary storage of ashes in Government facilities*

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) provides service for temporary storage of ashes in all its crematoria free of charge in the first two months following cremation. The duration may be extended upon

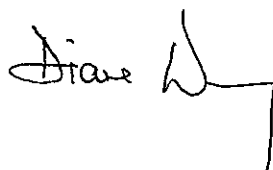
application at a monthly fee of \$80. At present, FEHD has a total of about 23 000 temporary urn storage spaces at the Kwai Chung Crematorium and Wo Hop Shek Columbarium (Phase III & Phase V), of which some 60 temporary storage spaces are being occupied. An additional 28 000 temporary urn storage spaces will be made available by stages from Q3 2016 to Q2 2017. In other words, the total number of temporary urn storage spaces of the Government would be increased to more than 50 000 in the coming year. FEHD is exploring the feasibility of increasing temporary storage spaces in other venues.

*Supply of new niches by religious bodies and non-governmental organisations*

The Development Bureau publishes on its website and updates regularly the "Information on Private Columbaria", which provides information on the land/lease (user restriction) and town planning aspects in relation to private columbaria that are known to the Lands Department and/or Planning Department and which these departments have reasons to believe are operating as columbaria. Such information does not make a distinction between religious bodies and non-governmental organisations and commercial operators, nor give the number of niches provided therein.

There are columbaria within the private cemeteries specified in Schedule 5 to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132). These columbaria are mainly operated by religious or ethnic bodies. At present, there are a total of about 300 000 niches in these columbaria. It is anticipated that from 2016 to 2018, some 62 000 new niches will be made available in these columbaria for allocation. Currently, such columbaria in private cemeteries are regulated under the Private Cemeteries Regulation (Cap. 132, sub. leg. BF). If the Private Columbaria Bill as formulated is enacted in future, they will still be regulated under the same Regulation as per the status quo.

Yours sincerely,



(Miss Diane WONG)  
for Secretary for Food and Health