

**For discussion on
27 April 2021**

**Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Improvement of
Environmental Hygiene and Cityscape**

Improvement of Environmental Hygiene of Public Markets

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the work and measures of the Government in improving the environmental hygiene of public markets.

Background

2. At present, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) manages 97 public markets, including 74 public markets mainly offering wet and dry goods (39 of which comprise a cooked food centre) and 23 cooked food markets, with around 14 000 stalls selling a wide variety of commodities ranging from fresh produce, cooked food, clothing to household items. In tandem with the development of society and changes in public needs, and in response to the rising public expectation on markets and the COVID-19 pandemic, FEHD continues to step up cleaning and disinfection and endeavours to improve the environmental hygiene of markets under its management.

Improvement Work and Measures

Enhanced cleaning and disinfection

3. In addition to regular cleaning of communal areas in public markets, FEHD has enhanced the anti-epidemic measures in its markets since January 2020 to safeguard the health and safety of market stall tenants and the public amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from daily thorough cleaning, the frequency

of disinfecting communal areas and facilities in markets (including toilets, escalators, elevators and stair handrails) has increased to at least three times a day to reduce the risk of virus transmission in markets. In July and August 2020, FEHD additionally arranged for over 60 of its markets to be closed an hour earlier for deep cleaning and disinfection. Since October 2020, most of the FEHD markets, based on their actual circumstances, have been arranged to be closed an hour earlier for deep cleaning to keep them clean and hygienic. When conducting deep cleaning and disinfection after the markets are closed, refuse is cleared, passageways and drains are cleaned, communal areas and facilities in the markets are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. FEHD also calls for co-operation of stall tenants to conduct cleaning and disinfection at their stalls, clear miscellaneous items and ensure that goods and food are properly stored, with a view to keeping the stall areas and public places clean and hygienic, and eliminating the food sources and hiding places of rodents. In addition, FEHD will carry out deep cleaning work on the periphery of the markets and nearby streets. Photos of deep cleaning work are at [Annex I](#).

Upgrading of equipment and application of technology and technical know-how

4. FEHD has progressively introduced pressure water surface cleaners in public markets since 2019. The cleaners can effectively improve the efficiency of cleaning passageway floor in markets. In 2020, apart from providing disinfectant hand sanitisers in the communal areas and installing sensor-type toilet seat sanitisers in the toilets of all public markets, FEHD also provided standalone air coolers in some public markets to improve air ventilation, so as to reduce the risk of virus transmission in the markets. To further reduce the risk of virus spread, FEHD applies anti-microbial coating to the communal areas and facilities of markets with high patronage rate, and studies the feasibility of using disinfection robots to conduct disinfection in public markets.

5. In addition, FEHD also carries out improvement works from time to time having regard to the circumstances of individual public markets. The works include replacement of aged pipes, refurbishment of market toilets (relevant photos are at [Annex II](#)) and improvement of the design of ditches to enhance rodent prevention, so as to further improve the environment and hygiene of public markets.

Strengthening communication and health education

6. Apart from enhancing the cleaning work for markets, FEHD also strengthens communication with market stall tenants and conducts health education. Discussions about the direction of market management are held with stakeholders through different channels such as regular meetings with various Market Management Consultative Committees, and information on public health and food safety is disseminated to market stall representatives, so as to further enhance the effectiveness of market management. To complement its efforts, FEHD also actively encourages market stall tenants' participation in the Monthly Market Cleansing Day.

Stepping up enforcement actions

7. In addition to the above measures and efforts, FEHD will take resolute enforcement actions against irregularities in public markets. In 2020, 1 623 warning letters were issued to market stall tenants and 1 292 prosecutions were instituted. There were 11 stalls with tenancy agreements terminated for breach of law or tenancy terms.

Conclusion

8. FEHD will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach to improve the environmental hygiene of public markets.

9. Members are invited to take note of and provide comments on the Government's work and measures to improve the environmental hygiene of public markets set out above.

Food and Health Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
April 2021

**Deep cleaning and disinfection at public markets
by market service contractors of FEHD**



Toilets at public markets after refurbishment

