

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**DEVB(PL)073**

Question Serial No.

Head : 82 Buildings Department    Subhead (No. & title) :

0180

Programme : Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer : Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Development

Question :

How many cases of public complaints on water seepage have the Joint Office, established by the Buildings Department and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department as a pilot programme, handled in 2008 and 2009 respectively? Among them, how many cases have been resolved? For those complaint cases that the water seepage problems cannot be resolved, how will the Administration provide further assistance?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Hok-ming

Reply :

Water seepage in private premises is primarily a matter of building management and maintenance for property owners. However, if the problem of water seepage causes public health nuisance, building structural safety risks or wastage of water, the Government will then consider intervention by exercising the relevant statutory powers. Based on this principle, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Buildings Department have established a Joint Office (JO) as a pilot programme since 2006 to assist members of the public to tackle some of the water seepage problems.

The relevant statistics are tabulated as follows –

<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Total number of cases handled	16 708	18 237
Number of cases screened out <sup>Note</sup>	7 144	8 115
Total number of cases with investigation concluded	9 564	10 122
– Number of cases with seepage ceased during investigation	4 102	3 876
– Number of cases with source identified	4 476	4 813
– Number of cases with source cannot be identified and seepage persisted	986	1 433

Note The JO has prescribed standards and requirements for the investigation of sources of water seepage. Some water seepage complaints received do not involve public health nuisance, building structural safety risks or wastage of water, and hence do not fall within the scope of follow-up action under the statutory authority of the JO. There are also cases where the complaints are falsified or complainants have withdrawn their complaints such that the JO would not continue with the investigations.

Identification of the possible source(s) of water seepage is not a straightforward matter and is often complicated by the fact that there may be more than one possible source of water seepage in any single case. Cooperation of the concerned owners/occupiers is critical for JO staff's entry into their premises to conduct multiple non-destructive tests to identify the source of water seepage. If the JO's investigation result reveals that a water seepage problem involves public health nuisance, building structural safety risks or wastage of water, the JO and relevant government departments will take enforcement action under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) or Waterworks Ordinance (Cap. 102), so as to assist the complainants to curb the sources of water seepage.

For a case where the source of water seepage cannot be identified, the JO will keep the investigation information for future reference. In case the complainant notices any change in the circumstances such as a change in the extent of seepage, the complainant may inform the JO for a review of the case.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters     AU Choi-kai    

Post Title     Director of Buildings    

Date     19 March 2010