

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

Head: 82 Buildings Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

With the Buildings Department to “continue the operation of the pilot joint office with Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to handle public complaints about water seepage problems which would be extended for another two years from 2012–13”, what are the resources involved? Please provide, in table form, the respective number of complaint cases the joint office received each year since its establishment, the categories of the complaints, the average, shortest and longest time required for handling the cases and the number of outstanding cases which have so far remained unresolved. Has the Government assessed whether the operation of the pilot joint office is successful? Will the Government consider changing it into a permanent office? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Tai-fai

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 consider intervention by exercising the relevant statutory powers. To facilitate action, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Buildings Department have established the Joint Office (JO) as a pilot programme since 2006 to co-ordinate investigation of complaints and taking of enforcement actions. This pilot programme will be extended for another two years from 2012-13, involving an estimated expenditure of about \$49 million per year.

The numbers of water seepage cases received and handled by the JO since its establishment in 2006 to 2011 are tabulated below :

Year	Cases received	Cases handled
2006	12 733	7 294
2007	17 405	13 375
2008	21 717	16 708
2009	21 769	18 237
2010	25 717	22 971
2011	23 660	23 210

As there is a lapse of time between receipt of complaint and completion of investigation/enforcement action, the number of cases handled in a year does not necessarily correspond to the number of cases received in that year. As at 31 December 2011, 21 995 cases were being followed up by the JO and were under various stages of investigation. The JO has not compiled statistics on the types of seepage cases and the time taken for investigation of individual cases.

The Administration has been monitoring the work of the JO and will review its long term role, organisation and staffing to ensure effective enforcement of the law and efficient operation of the JO.

Signature _____

Name in block letters AU Choi-kai

Post Title Director of Buildings

Date 27.2.2012