

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

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Question Serial No.

1665

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

Programme: Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

My Councillor's Office frequently receives complaints about water seepage in residential units. Quite a number of them involve cases that have been reported to the Joint Office (JO) which handles public reports about water seepage problems but to no avail. Please advise this Committee:

In each of the past three financial years (2010-11 to 2012-13), what was the number of complaints about water seepage in residential units received by the JO? What were the respective numbers of complaints that were handled successfully and unsuccessfully? What were the average amounts of manpower and resources required for handling each complaint? In 2013-14, what is the estimated number of complaint cases?

Asked by: Hon. TSE Wai-chun, Paul

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 (BD) have established the Joint Office (JO) as a pilot programme since 2006 to co-ordinate investigation of reports on water seepage and taking of enforcement actions. The programme has been extended for another two years from 2012-13, involving provision of 64 professional and technical staff from the BD and an estimated expenditure of about \$23 million per year for engaging outsourced consultants to assist in conducting professional investigation on water seepage cases. The JO does not keep statistics on the average amount of manpower and resources required for handling each report on seepage.

The relevant statistics on the numbers of water seepage cases received and handled by the JO in the past three years are tabulated below:

Number of Cases	2010	2011	2012
Cases received ^{Note 1}	25 717	23 660	27 353
Cases handled	22 971	23 210	24 553
• Cases screened out ^{Note 2}	11 051	12 219	13 727
• Cases with investigations concluded :	11 920	10 991	10 826
- Seepage ceased during investigation	4 861	4 703	4 810
- Source identified	4 737	4 199	4 053
- Source could not be identified	2 322	2 089	1 963

Note 1 : As there is a lapse of time between receipt of a report and completion of handling a report, the number of reports handled in a year does not necessarily correspond to the number of reports received in that year.

Note 2 : There are cases which do not fall within the scope of follow-up action under the statutory authority of the JO, including unjustified cases and cases withdrawn by informants, and hence investigation will not be conducted for such cases.

It is estimated that the JO will receive about 27 000 reports on water seepage in 2013.

Name in block letters: AU Choi-kai

Post Title: Director of Buildings

Date: 2.4.2013