

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**DEVB(PL)248**

**(Question Serial No. 6083)**

Head: (82) Buildings Department  
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses  
Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works  
Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (HUI Siu-wai)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

1. Regarding the Joint Office (JO) established by the Buildings Department (BD) and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), please provide details of its work after its operation was made permanent including:
  - i. the number of seepage complaints received;
  - ii. the number of cases handled;
  - iii. the number of cases involving repeated complaints;
  - iv. the number of cases with sources of water seepage identified;
  - v. the number of cases with applications made to the Court for entry warrants to conduct investigation;
  - vi. the number of cases with applications for entry warrants to conduct investigation granted by the Court;
  - vii. the number of cases with nuisance notices issued;
  - viii. the number of cases prosecuted;
  - ix. the number of cases with nuisance orders issued by the Court; and
  - x. the number of cases convicted and the amount fined.
2. How many of those cases received before JO was made permanent have not yet been processed or the sources of water seepage have not yet been identified? What are the reasons for that?

3. What equipment or instruments for tests to identify the sources of water seepage does JO possess? Will JO consider upgrading its instruments or bringing in advanced instruments in the coming year, to enhance the efficiency and success rate in handling water seepage complaints? What are the details, such as the estimated expenditure?
4. Has the Department reviewed whether JO had sufficient manpower? If manpower will be increased in the coming year, please provide details of the staff establishment, ranks and the estimated expenditure.

Asked by: HON CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth (Member Question No. 372)

Reply:

1. The statistics on water seepage reports received by the Joint Office (JO) set up by the Buildings Department (BD) and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, reports handled, results of investigation and enforcement actions taken in 2014 are tabulated below –

	<b>Number of Cases in 2014</b>
Reports received <sup>(1)</sup>	27 896
Reports handled <sup>(2)</sup>	22 056
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cases screened out<sup>(3)</sup></li> </ul>	10 961
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cases with investigations concluded</li> </ul>	11 095
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Seepage ceased during investigation</li> </ul>	4 146
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Source of water seepage identified</li> </ul>	4 816
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Source of water seepage could not be identified and investigation terminated.</li> </ul>	2 133
Entry warrants granted by the Court <sup>(2),(4)</sup>	74
Nuisance Notices issued <sup>(2)</sup>	4 700
Prosecutions instigated <sup>(2)</sup>	88
Nuisance Orders granted by the Court <sup>(2)</sup>	31
Convictions <sup>(2)</sup>	60
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Range of fines</li> </ul>	\$500 - \$7,000

Note<sup>(1)</sup>: The JO does not compile statistics on the number of cases involving repeated complaints.

Note<sup>(2)</sup>: The figures do not necessarily correspond to the number of reports received in the same year.

Note<sup>(3)</sup>: These are cases such as unjustified cases and withdrawn cases, for which no investigation will be made by the JO.

Note <sup>(4)</sup>: The JO does not keep statistics on the number of applications made to the Court for entry warrants.

2. The JO does not compile statistics on the number of outstanding cases received before the JO was made permanent in April 2014. The handling time for investigating each individual case varies due to a number of factors, including the nature and complexity of the case and whether the relevant owners and occupants are cooperative.
3. The JO has engaged outsourced consultants who may make use of different methods and equipment in the investigation of the source of water seepage as part of their service. We are not able to provide breakdown of the expenditure spent solely on equipment. The JO keeps abreast of the latest technologies with a view to exploring more effective investigation methods in identifying the sources of water seepage in buildings. In recent years, new equipment such as infrared camera and microwave tomography scanning device has been deployed on a trial basis to facilitate identification of the sources of water seepage in complicated cases. A consultant has also been engaged to study the latest technological methods in identifying the source of water seepage in buildings. The study commenced in October 2014 and is expected to be completed in 18 months. The expenditure for the study is estimated to be \$4.5 million.
4. Same as in 2014-15, there will be 64 professional and technical staff from the BD in the JO in 2015-16. The BD will continue to keep in view the manpower situation of the JO.

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