CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1633)

Head: (82) Buildings Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Buildings and Buildings Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (CHEUNG Tin-cheung)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the Joint Office for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints (JO) under the Buildings Department and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, please inform this Committee of the following:

(1) the number of requests for assistance received by JO in 2018-19; among these cases, the number of cases where the source of water seepage could be identified, where the investigation is undergoing and where the source could not be identified;

(2) the number of cases where JO adopted the colour dye testing method, infrared ray testing method and other testing methods in 2018-19; the estimated percentage change of the number of cases adopting the above testing methods in 2019-20.

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 63)

Reply:

(1) Statistics on handling of water seepage reports by the Joint Office (JO) set up by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Buildings Department in 2018 are tabulated below –

Number of Cases	2018
Reports received	36 684
Reports handled[(1)]	28 221
• Cases screened out[(2)]	14 571
• Cases with investigation concluded	13 650

Number of Cases	2018
- Cases with seepage ceased during investigation	4 757
- Cases with source of water seepage identified	5 729
- Cases with source of water seepage not identified and investigation terminated	3 164
Reports undergoing investigation[(1)]	11 070

Note [(1)]: The figures do not necessarily correspond to the number of reports received in the same year.

Note [(2)]: These include unjustified cases and withdrawn cases where no investigation was conducted by JO.

(2) Generally speaking, JO staff are responsible for carrying out initial investigation of the source of seepage, such as colour water test for drainage pipes. In case the initial investigation cannot identify the source of seepage, professional investigation by outsourced consultants is required. In 2018, 13 650 cases with the conventional tests including colour water tests for drainage pipes were conducted, 9 716 of which required professional investigation. Among these 9 716 cases, 92 cases had adopted new testing technologies (i.e. infrared thermography (IT) and microwave tomography (MT)) in the investigation.

Since the second half of June 2018, JO has applied these new testing technologies to water seepage investigation in three pilot districts (i.e. Kowloon City, Wanchai and Central and Western) where applicable. Specifically, if these new testing technologies cannot be effectively applied due to, for example, spalling of concrete ceilings at the locations of water seepage, blockage of pipes and other facilities, JO has to resort to the conventional tests.

With the experience and data obtained through the pilot adoption of the new testing technologies as mentioned above, JO will evaluate the effectiveness of the new testing technologies and refine the technical guidelines and procedures relating to the use of the testing methods. JO will progressively extend the use of IT and MT to water seepage investigation in other pilot districts in the third quarter of 2019. JO is unable to predict the percentage change in the number of cases of water seepage to be investigated by different testing methods in 2019, which depends on the number of reports received in the pilot districts and the site circumstances concerned.

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