

LCQ11: Windows provided for units of transitional housing

Following is a question by the Hon Jeremy Tam and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

Section 30 of the Building (Planning) Regulations (Cap. 123 sub. leg. F) provides that every room used for habitation shall be provided with natural lighting and ventilation by means of one or more windows which shall be so constructed that the percentage of the aggregate superficial area of glass in the window or windows facing directly into the external air is not less than 10 per cent of the area of the floor of the room (window area/floor area ratio). On the other hand, the Government indicated, in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on March 20 this year, that it would support and facilitate the implementation of various short-term initiatives put forward and carried out by community groups to increase the supply of transitional housing, including considering waiving some requirements for the provision in the living areas of windows that conform to the specification requirements. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council of the total number of transitional housing units in Hong Kong which were occupied or were ready for occupation as at February 28 this year, and set out in the table below the respective numbers and percentages of such units whose window area/floor area ratio belonged to the ratio ranges set out in the table?

Window area/floor area ratio (Rounded to the nearest 0.01 per cent)	Number and percentage of units
0 per cent	
0.01 per cent to 2.5 per cent	
2.51 per cent to 5 per cent	
5.01 per cent to 7.5 per cent	
7.51 per cent to 10 per cent	
10.01 per cent or above	

Reply:

President,

The Task Force on Transitional Housing has, over a period of time in the past, facilitated the implementation of a number of transitional housing projects initiated by the community. As at February 2019, a total of nine

major non-profit making community organisations/social enterprises provided about 610 transitional housing units, of which about 220 were launched under the "Community Housing Movement" of Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS). Details of these projects are set out below:

Service Operators	Project	Number of Units
Light Be	Light Home Light Housing	70 40
Society for Community Organization	Prior Community Social Housing Community Joy's To Gather Rooms for Rent	14 39* 4*
Lok Sin Tong	Lok Sin Tong Social Housing Scheme	20* 55
St. James' Settlement	James' House	14*
Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council	Good Homes	60*
The Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association Social Service	Best Neighbour Walk Together	16*
The Salvation Army	Home Plus	53*
Hong Kong Housing Society	Transitional Rental Housing Scheme – Yue Kwong Chuen	217
Yan Oi Tong	Green Garden	11*
Total number of Units		613

* Units launched under the "Community Housing Movement" operated by HKCSS.

According to the Circular Letter to the industry issued on October 25, 2018, Buildings Department (BD) taking into consideration of the planning and design limitations in the old-style domestic buildings, will grant some "Modifications" or "Exemptions" concerning the provision of transitional housing units inside old-style domestic buildings. The provision of compensatory measures will be required at the same time, so as to ensure the "Modifications" or "Exemptions" granted will not affect the safety and hygiene standards including the natural lighting requirement for the habitable areas, as stipulated in the Building Ordinance. Generally speaking, the related "Modifications" or "Exemptions" applications only involve parts of the transitional housing units. The aforesaid Circular Letter has stipulated the compensatory measures needed which include the annual inspection and submission of the inspection report by an Authorized Person to ascertain the relevant compensatory measures and the conditions imposed in the "Modifications" or "Exemptions" Permits were complied.

Both the Transport and Housing Bureau and the BD had not prepared the

statistics of the total glazing area of external facing windows in relation to the floor area of the transitional housing units.

Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Sha Tin

Police advise motorists that special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Sha Tin to facilitate the race meeting today (May 8).

The arrangements will come into effect two hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

Appropriate traffic signs will be put up and police will be on hand to guide motorists.

The Police also appeal to people going to Sha Tin Racecourse for the race meeting and to Happy Valley Racecourse for cross betting to make maximum use of public transport.

Parking spaces at the two racecourses are available only to holders of appropriate permits issued by Hong Kong Jockey Club and any vehicles illegally parked will be towed away.

LCQ1: Employment benefits for non-skilled workers engaged under the Government's outsourced service contracts

Following is a question by the Hon Poon Siu-ping and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Joseph Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

On October 10 last year, the Government announced a number of measures to enhance the employment benefits for non-skilled workers engaged under the Government's outsourced service contracts (outsourced workers) tendered on or

after April 1 this year (enhancement measures). As for those service contracts which (i) were under the tendering stage during the transitional period from October 10 last year to March 31 this year and (ii) had been awarded under the old terms, the Government would make transitional arrangements in the hope that more outsourced workers could be benefited. On the other hand, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has, in recent years, awarded outsourced service contracts through tenders with a validity period of six years, during which the contracts with the relevant contractors may be renewed once every two or three years (renewable contract arrangement). Some workers engaged by such contractors have relayed that they have not benefited from the enhancement measures. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the government departments which currently adopt, when outsourcing services, tender conditions that include the renewable contract arrangement;

(2) whether those outsourced service contracts awarded under the renewable contract arrangement are covered by the enhancement measures; if so, whether HA and the relevant government departments will discuss with the contractors concerned the expeditious implementation of such measures; if not, of the reasons for that, and whether there are initiatives to enable the workers concerned to benefit from the enhancement measures; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) of the respective current numbers of outsourced service contracts, awarded under the renewable contract arrangement (a) within the transitional period and (b) after April 1 this year, which were not covered by the enhancement measures, and set out in a table the following details of each contract:

(i) type of service(s) (e.g. cleansing, security or property management),
(ii) name of the procuring government department (e.g. the Housing Department),
(iii) name of contractor,
(iv) service district,
(v) number of outsourced workers, and
(vi) the commencement and expiry dates of the contract and the tender?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) and relevant procuring departments, the consolidated reply is as follows:

According to the information provided by the relevant procuring departments, currently all of the service contracts that rely heavily on the deployment of non-skilled workers (non-skilled worker contracts) awarded by tender have not incorporated the special provisions adopted by the HA for contract renewal arrangement. Departments should, upon contract expiry, award new contracts through tendering with new measures incorporated to protect the

employment benefits of non-skilled workers.

The HA, with the Housing Department as its executive arm, is a statutory body responsible for developing and implementing public housing programmes. The HA is not subject to government procurement regulations. That said, it will make reference to government practices and adopt applicable principles and practices in its own system and regulations.

To protect non-skilled workers, the HA, in awarding non-skilled worker contracts, requires service contractors to adopt the Standard Employment Contract (SEC) promulgated by the Labour Department. To tie in with the Government's new measures to protect the benefits of non-skilled workers, the HA will adopt the newly revised SEC in all relevant contracts and make reference to the transitional arrangements announced by the Government, where appropriate.

According to the HA, most of its existing non-skilled worker contracts have a duration of two to three years, with special provisions incorporated whereby service contractors fulfilling the requirements of contract renewal may, subject to mutual agreement upon contract expiry, have their contracts extended for one to two times in the original terms (unless otherwise specified), while the period of extension will depend on the contract terms. To protect non-skilled workers, the HA will also require service contractors to sign the new SEC with their non-skilled workers when relevant contracts are extended under the special provisions.

EMSD announces latest sampling results for legionella at fresh water cooling towers

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (May 8) announced that the department tested 19 water samples collected from cooling towers in 15 buildings in its routine inspections in April this year. None of them was detected to have a total legionella count at or above the upper threshold, which is 1 000 colony-forming units per millilitre. The latest statistics are set out in Annex 1.

The EMSD also announced the locations of buildings which were served with nuisance notices during the preceding three-month period as the total legionella count was found in the fresh water cooling towers to be equal to or above the upper threshold. Details can be found in Annex 2. The EMSD publishes the latest statistics of the above information on a half-monthly basis on its website

(www.emsd.gov.hk/en/other_regulatory_services/cooling_towers/water_sampling/i

[ndex.html](#)).

The EMSD reminds the owners of fresh water cooling towers that they have the responsibility to design, operate and maintain cooling towers properly. They should arrange regular inspections, timely maintenance and periodic testing of the water quality in their cooling towers in accordance with the Code of Practice for Fresh Water Cooling Towers issued by the department to prevent the proliferation of legionella.

Red flag hoisted at Kiu Tsui Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 8) that the Environmental Protection Department has classified the water quality at Kiu Tsui Beach in Sai Kung District as Grade 4, which means the beach is not suitable for swimming. The red flag has been hoisted. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach until further notice.