

LCQ18: Quality of drinking water in public rental housing estates

Following is a question by the Hon Paul Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (June 13):

Question:

After a number of drinking water samples taken from a number of public rental housing estates were tested and found in July 2015 to have a lead content exceeding the provisional guideline value set by the World Health Organization (lead in drinking water incident), the fresh water mains in a number of housing estates (including Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate) have been comprehensively replaced. However, a number of residents of Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate have recently complained to me, claiming that the quality of the drinking water supplied to their units was poor. Based on my on-site observation, the drinking water is turbid and foamy and even looks like cappuccino when put in a coffee cup. It is learnt that the residents of that estate have repeatedly enquired with the contractor engaged for the replacement of the fresh water mains and the Housing Department about the reasons for the drinking water being turbid and foamy, but the personnel concerned merely replied that the drinking water of that estate was of normal quality and advised the residents to run the tap for about half an hour every day before using the water for drinking. On the other hand, rainfall to date this year has been lower than that in previous years, resulting in low water storage and dry bottoms of some reservoirs. The Water Supplies Department also calls on members of the public from time to time to conserve water. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has studied the causes for the drinking water in Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate being turbid notwithstanding the fresh water mains therein have been comprehensively replaced;

(2) whether the authorities, following the replacement of fresh water mains for a number of estates in light of the lead in drinking water incident, have conducted regular sample tests on the quality of drinking water therein; if so, of the details, and set out the sampling dates and test results by name of estate; if not, the reasons for that; whether the authorities received complaints in the past three months about turbidity of drinking water in other estates;

(3) whether it has assessed, in the event that all of the households of Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate follow the advice to run the tap for half an hour every day before using the water for drinking, (i) the increase in the daily water consumption of that estate, (ii) the increase in the monthly water charge payable by each household on average, and (iii) whether the drying up of reservoirs will be exacerbated; whether it has assessed, when households of

other estates who face the same situation of drinking water being turbid and foamy run the tap for half an hour every day before using the water for drinking, if the water consumption will increase substantially and result in the Government having to spend more public money on purchasing Dongjiang water in the next agreement on the supply of Dongjiang water to Hong Kong; and

(4) as the advice of running the tap for half an hour before using water is contrary to the Government's advice to conserve water, and members of the public are caught in a dilemma, how the authorities solve the hygiene problem of drinking water?

Reply:

President,

Since March 2016, the contractors of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) have been carrying out replumbing works to replace sub-standard water pipes for the 11 affected public rental housing estates, including Lower Ngau Tau Kok (LNTK) Estate Phase 1. The replumbing works comprise two parts, namely those in the communal areas and those inside individual flats. All the works in the communal areas were completed in the second quarter of 2017. At present, the contractors are replacing water pipes inside individual flats and have completed about 80 per cent of the works.

Upon the completion of the works by stages, the contractor concerned has to comply with the requirements of the Water Supplies Department (WSD) to take water samples for water quality tests. Only when the test results meet the standards would the WSD confirm the works is in compliance with the relevant requirements. To date, the test results of all water samples taken from the communal areas and individual flats which have completed replumbing have met the required standards.

The consolidated response to the four parts of the Hon Paul Tse's question is as follows:

To follow up on the question about the quality of water supply to LNTK Estate, the WSD launched an immediate investigation. On June 2, the WSD staff collected water samples from two government fire hydrants close to the water supply point to LNTK Estate and from a toilet in the LNTK Estate Plaza. According to the test results, the water samples met the required standards, indicating that the water supply to LNTK Estate was normal.

The WSD and the Housing Department (HD) also checked records of the past three months and found no water quality complaints from LNTK, including those about odour and colour. The HD received a report on unpleasant odour and turbidity in fresh water from the resident of a flat in Kai Ching Estate that has completed replumbing. The contractor of the HA conducted an inspection and found no such water quality problems. Other than this case, neither the WSD nor HD has received report on water quality problems from other public

rental housing estates that have completed repumbling similar to the one in LNTK Estate described in the question.

Furthermore, the WSD monitors the quality of drinking water at consumers' taps through the Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring Programme that the participating premises are randomly selected from all water accounts, including those that have completed replumbing. Test results of water samples collected from the premises will be compiled as water quality statistics for publication on the WSD's website which is updated once every week.

Furthermore, the WSD promulgated the WSD Circular Letter No. 6/2017 in mid-2017 requiring all completed inside services of all new buildings to adopt a systematic flushing protocol in order to reduce metal leaching from the newly installed pipes and fittings to a low level. As for the existing buildings, the WSD published the "Water Use Tips" to suggest residents run the drinking water taps every morning and night for about 15 minutes, and run the tap for two minutes each time before using the water for drinking or cooking purposes in the first three days following the completion of replumbing works. Since residents can save the flushed water for non-potable uses, such as watering plants, cleaning floors and washing, there will not be water wastage.

EPD commends organisations for enhancing indoor air quality

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (June 13) held the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Certification Award Ceremony cum Technical Seminar to commend over 1 500 premises which have made efforts to enhance IAQ, of which 318 premises achieved Excellent Class IAQ while 1 244 premises achieved Good Class IAQ. Premises which have joined the IAQ Certification Scheme for Offices and Public Places for 10 years as well as the 10 organisations with the highest participation rates also received special awards.

The EPD launched the Scheme in 2003 to promote good IAQ management practices. The number of premises participating in the Scheme has been continuously increasing and the premises cover various sectors, including office buildings, shopping malls, clubhouses, educational institutions, hotels and other public places. By the end of 2017, 1 562 premises in Hong Kong had obtained IAQ certificates, marking an increase of 12 per cent compared to 2016's figure and an approximately 18-fold growth compared to the number in 2004, showing that the community has become increasingly aware of the importance of IAQ management.

The Government has all along been taking the lead in promoting good IAQ.

According to the circular on Green Government Buildings, existing government buildings are required to strive for Good Class IAQ irrespective of their size. Speaking at the ceremony, the Deputy Director of Environmental Protection, Mrs Alice Cheung, said that maintaining good IAQ is very important as many people stay indoors most of the time every day. She also praised the premises owners and property management companies participating in the Scheme for setting a good example and helping to raise awareness in the community about IAQ.

Mrs Cheung also pointed out that the EPD will continue to actively promote the Scheme by encouraging more premises to join, and is also planning to update the IAQ objectives to further enhance the IAQ of the participating premises of the Scheme.

A technical seminar was held following the award ceremony, with a representative from the Hong Kong Productivity Council briefing the attendees on reducing exposure to volatile organic compounds in commercial premises, as well as professional and management representatives of a shopping mall and a private estate clubhouse sharing tips for achieving good IAQ.

Any organisation or individual interested in joining or having a better understanding of the Scheme can obtain more information from the IAQ Information Centre or via its dedicated website at www.iaq.gov.hk.

[Appeal for information on missing man \(with photo\)](#)

Police today (June 13) appealed to the public for information on a missing man.

Chan Wing-piu, aged 77, went missing after he entered Hong Kong in the afternoon of March 19. His family made a report to the Police on June 9.

He is about 1.7 metres tall, 58 kilograms in weight and of thin build. He has a long face with yellow complexion and short white hair. He was last seen wearing a black jacket and blue jeans.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of Kowloon West on 3661 8036 or 9020 6542, or email to rmpu-kw-2@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



[LCQ12: Safety of workers carrying out maintenance and repair of building facilities on external walls of buildings](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (June 13):

Question:

Some suppliers of air-conditioning (AC) facilities and practitioners of the AC works trade have relayed to me that the designs of some private buildings newly completed in recent years have not fully taken into account the needs of workers when they carry out replacement works and repair works for AC facilities on the external walls of such buildings in future. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it is aware of the situation that although some private buildings have been installed with gondola working platform systems (gondolas), (i) the designs of the buildings concerned have failed to dovetail with the use of the gondolas in practice, resulting in a gondola being unable to reach the location for installation of the facility concerned, and (ii) there is still certain distance between a gondola and the facility on an external wall even if such location is reachable, resulting in the workers having to stretch their bodies out of the gondola in order to carry out the works which poses the risk of workers falling from heights; if it is, of the measures put in

place by the Government to improve such a situation; if it does not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether the Buildings Department has reviewed how far developers have complied with its Guidelines for Designing Access and Safety Provisions for the Maintenance and Repair of External Air Conditioners at Height issued in December 2016 and the effectiveness of the Guidelines; if so, of the outcome of the review; if not, whether it will conduct such a review expeditiously;

(3) whether it will consider the suggestions put forward by the practitioners in the AC works trade of introducing legislation to stipulate that the designs of AC platforms on the external walls of a building to be built must:

- (i) provide reasonable and adequate space for an AC facility to be placed flat on the platform,
- (ii) provide safe access for workers to enter and exit,
- (iii) fit in with various tubes on the external walls, and
- (iv) install with anchor devices (e.g. "eye bolt") at appropriate locations for workers to attach their safety belts; and

(4) as the relevant legislation in Singapore stipulates that developers must take into primary and necessary consideration the needs of future maintenance and repair of building facilities when they draw up designs of buildings, whether the Government will (i) enact legislation to enforce similar requirements, and (ii) introduce common working platforms on external walls to provide workers with reasonable and adequate working space, thereby minimising their risks of falling from heights?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to occupational safety for carrying out repair and maintenance works at external walls. Labour Department (LD), Buildings Department (BD) and Construction Industry Council (CIC) have issued guidelines on different aspects of external repair and maintenance of buildings.

In consultation with LD and BD, the Development Bureau provides a consolidated reply to the four parts of the question as follows:

(1) External repair and maintenance works at buildings fall under the portfolio of occupational safety, such works should fulfill the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Chapter 509), Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Chapter 59) and relevant subsidiary legislations so as to ensure workers' safety. For work safety related to external walls of buildings, LD has issued code of practices and guidance notes for the industry, setting out detailed requirements and measures for general work setting and circumstances. Duty holders should follow such codes of practice properly. As building design varies, contractors or employers are responsible for conducting target risk assessment before commencing external repair and maintenance works of buildings, including duly consider the actual work setting and circumstances (such as the uniqueness of building design),

so as to formulate appropriate safe methodologies, procedures and necessary safety measures to comply with statutory requirements. For the circumstances raised in the question, relevant departments have also through the industry gathered such views. Subject to the concerned circumstances, relevant departments will review the legislations, codes of practice and guidance notes from time to time to protect the occupational safety of workers.

(2) With regards to the design of new buildings, BD has issued a circular letter to the industry in December 2016 promulgating guidelines for design access and safety provisions for the maintenance and repair of external air conditioners (ACs) at height. The guidelines set out the requirements regarding adequate working spaces around ACs and appropriate access, etc. Upon issue of the guidelines, development projects with general building plans first approved by BD involving exemption of ACs platforms from the calculation of GFA should comply with the guidelines and provide relevant ancillary facilities. A working group was set up by BD, LD and the building industry in 2017 to review the guidelines for designing ACs platform to facilitate workers carrying out repair works safely. The working group also reviews the requirements for installing cast-in anchor devices on external walls to complement the use of safety belt. BD will consult the building industry later on the proposed revisions to the guidelines of ACs platform per the established procedures.

(3) & (4) Per the established policy, LD is responsible for the enforcement of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Chapter 509), Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Chapter 59) and relevant subsidiary legislations. LD has all along been promoting the safety of repair and maintenance on external walls through inspections and enforcement actions, etc. These legislations have stipulated the requirements for duty holders undertaking works-at-height (including works on external walls), including provision of safe working platforms for workers working at height with a view to safeguarding the occupational safety of them. For carrying out of external repair and maintenance of buildings, LD has also promulgated codes of practice and guidance notes for the industry, including Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety, Code of Practice for Safe Use and Operation of Suspended Working Platforms and Guidance Notes on Classification and Use of Safety Belts and their Anchorage Systems, etc. These codes of practice and guidelines help contractors and employers understand and comply with the relevant legislative requirements. LD will review relevant codes of practices/guidance notes from time to time in order to meet changes in general working environment. On the other hand, to curb systemic safety risks at source more effectively through building design and management, LD will strength the engagement with project proponents of building works projects and urge relevant contractors to timely incorporate elements regarding work safety when considering construction methodologies and design during project design, preparatory stages and construction stages with a view to enhancing occupational safety and preventing accidents.

BD also reviews the subsidiary legislations under the Buildings Ordinance (Chapter 123) from time to time and proposes suitable amendments as necessary with a view to keeping abreast of latest building technology

advancement and responding the industry's reasonable requests thus facilitating the industry to carry out building works per the law. BD is now looking into the legislative amendment of the Building (Construction) Regulations (Chapter 123B) including introduction of requirements to mandate provision of adequate safety facilities in building design to facilitate future repair and maintenance works on external walls. The direction of the legislative amendments will be on performance-based of each building to allow greater flexibility in building design and cater for the rapid building technology advancements instead of prescribing a set of safety facilities to be applied to all buildings. According to this direction, when the amended regulations commence operation, BD will require Authorised Persons to provide information on the facilities for external repair of buildings, such as working platforms that conform with legislations relating to occupational safety and health etc. Such facilities must be specified on the building plans for consideration and approval by BD for compliance with the proposed revised provisions. To complement the proposed amended regulations, BD is formulating guidelines on the design of access for repair and will consult the building industry per the established procedures later.

Besides, CIC issued a newly amended guidelines on the Design, Installation and Maintenance of Cast-in Anchors at External walls of New Buildings (Version 2) in November last year to enhance the safety of work-at-height on the external walls of buildings. The Task Force on Work Safety of Repair, Maintenance, Alterations and Additions Sites under the Committee on Construction Site Safety of CIC is exploring how best to enhance workers' safety when conducting external repair and maintenance works through building design and strengthening preventive and protective measures for existing buildings. Members of the task force encompass various stakeholders of the construction industry, as well as representatives of occupational safety and health associations, property management and the relevant government departments, including LD and BD.

LCQ14: North Lantau traffic

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (June 13):

Question:

Some members of the transport sector have relayed that with the continuous growth in the population of Tung Chung in recent years, coupled with the imminent commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB), it is expected that the traffic in North Lantau will become busier day by day. Moreover, the road traffic between the Lantau Island/airport and the urban areas will be paralyzed whenever a traffic incident has occurred on the

North Lantau Highway and the Lantau Link. On the other hand, the Journey Time Indication Systems (JTISs) currently neither cover all trunk roads nor provide important information such as the occurrence of traffic incidents on the road ahead, rendering drivers often unable to switch in time to roads with smoother traffic. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the passenger throughput of the MTR Tung Chung Line is already close to its maximum capacity during peak hours, and passengers departing from and arriving at Hong Kong via HZMB upon its commissioning will add a burden on the Tung Chung Line, whether the authorities will request the MTR Corporation Limited to increase the train frequency of the Tung Chung Line by that time; if so, of the specific arrangements and timetable;

(2) whether the Transport Department will (i) study the provision of additional information by JTISs such as the occurrence of traffic incidents on the road ahead, and (ii) install JTISs along the various trunk roads (including Lung Cheung Road) connecting with the Lantau Link and at both ends to the Western Harbour Crossing; and

(3) whether it will consider providing ferry services plying the urban areas from the Skypier and Tung Chung Development Ferry Pier whenever a traffic incident has occurred on the North Lantau Highway and the Lantau Link?

Reply:

President,

The Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre (ETCC) of the Transport Department (TD) monitors traffic conditions 24-hour a day. Its task is to liaise and co-ordinate among government departments, public transport operators and relevant organisations on the handling of traffic incidents. It also disseminates to the public the latest traffic arrangements associated with the incidents concerned.

In view of the imminent commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, the ETCC will continue to monitor traffic conditions closely, and co-ordinate arrangements having regard to the actual situation in a timely manner.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Holden Chow's question is as follows:

(1) The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has been paying close attention to the services and passenger demand of Tung Chung Line, and will make appropriate adjustments where necessary to address the demand along busy sections of Tung Chung Line. To cater for the large number of passengers at Tsing Yi Station and Nam Cheong Station heading to Hong Kong Station during morning peak hours on weekdays, the MTRCL has deployed two additional departures this year operating directly from Tsing Yi Station to Hong Kong Station to alleviate crowding situation on trains. Moreover, through adjusting train services, the MTRCL has evened out the train service headways

departing from Tung Chung Station and Tsing Yi Station. At present, the Tung Chung Line train services are operating at a headway of about four minutes (Hong Kong to Tsing Yi) and six to eight minutes (Hong Kong to Tung Chung) on average during morning peak hours. According to the MTRCL, the train services are now operating smoothly and can meet passenger needs.

In addition, the MTRCL is progressively replacing the signalling system for seven railway lines (namely Tsuen Wan Line, Island Line, Kwun Tong Line, Tseung Kwan O Line, Disneyland Resort Line, Tung Chung Line and Airport Express Line). With the full completion of the signalling system upgrading works in 2026, the overall carrying capacity of these seven MTR lines can be increased by around 10%.

(2) There are currently 10 sets of Journey Time Indication Systems (JTISs) and five sets of Speed Map Panels (SMPs) Systems in Hong Kong. JTISs are installed at critical diversion points of cross-harbour routes (including routes leading to the Western Harbour Crossing) to inform motorists of the estimated journey time from the diversion points to the exit portals of the respective cross-harbour tunnels. On the other hand, SMPs are installed at critical diversion points of strategic routes in the New Territories heading to Kowloon, using different colours on the panel to indicate real-time traffic conditions on the roads ahead and the estimated journey time. Apart from this, the TD has installed variable message signs on strategic routes leading to the Lantau Link, including the section of West Kowloon Highway after the Western Harbour Crossing (Kowloon Exit), Tsing Kwai Highway, Tuen Mun Road, Stonecutters Bridge and Ting Kau Bridge, so as to disseminate traffic information to motorists in the form of text messages when traffic congestion occurs on the Lantau Link and Ting Kau Bridge.

To further enhance the dissemination of traffic information, the TD is planning to install about 1 150 sets of traffic detectors on strategic routes and major roads, as well as an addition of 16 sets of JTISs at critical diversion points of strategic routes, including an additional set of JTIS each on the West Kowloon Highway, Long Tin Road and Hung Tin Road and enhance the set of Speed Map Panel on San Tin Highway so as to provide more traffic information on journeys to the airport. The installation works will be carried out in phases, some of which will be commissioned in end-2018 at the earliest. The whole project is expected to be completed by end-2020.

(3) In case of serious obstructions on the North Lantau Highway or Lantau Link, the TD will contact the MTRCL immediately and make a request for strengthening train services on the Airport Express and Tung Chung Line so as to address the passenger demand. Upon discussion with the Government, the MTRCL agreed to enhance the services of Tung Chung Line and Airport Express within a short time in case of emergency so as to address the passenger demand between North Lantau or the airport and urban areas.

In the event that both road links and the railway lines are obstructed, the TD will mobilise ferries to provide transport services. The ETCC of the TD will liaise with public transport service operators and the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) for co-ordination. Subject to actual circumstances (including the resource deployment by operators, time of incident and its

duration), the ETCC will request ferry operators to endeavour to enhance ferry services (including the "Tuen Mun – Tung Chung", "Central – Discovery Bay" and "Central – Mui Wo" routes). The frequencies of feeder bus services serving the piers of the above routes will also be increased to facilitate travel to and from the airport, Lantau Island and urban areas for those switching to existing ferry services and feeder bus services. Additionally, the TD has signed an emergency ferry services agreement with the Hong Kong & Kowloon Motor Boats & Tug Boats Association Ltd (MBTA). In case of a serious incident on North Lantau Highway or Tsing Ma Bridge, or full closure of either of the two causing prolonged obstruction to road traffic, the MBTA will provide emergency ferry services between Tung Chung Development Pier and Tsuen Wan West Pier/ Disneyland Resort Pier. Where necessary and practicable, the Government will also consider using the SkyPier for providing emergency ferry services plying to and from Central Pier and Tuen Mun Ferry Pier to ease the flow of passengers. However, since the external transport links of Lantau Island and the airport have mainly been two land-based mass transit carriers, namely the railway and franchised buses, the role of waterborne transport as an alternative in case of full closure of land links is rather limited given the constraints of capacity and speed of ferries. Notwithstanding that, the Government will continue to co-operate closely with all relevant emergency units with a view to minimising the inconvenience caused to passengers and other members of the public.

For more effective dissemination of information, the TD will promptly inform the public of any traffic incident on Lantau Link and North Lantau Highway, and the latest updates on traffic conditions and public transport services on radio and television and via the websites and mobile phone applications of both the Department, major public transport service operators (including franchised bus companies and the MTRCL) and AAHK. This will enable the public to plan their journeys early or consider switching their routes or travelling modes. The TD will also make use of the variable message signs installed at Tsing Ma Control Area, Tsing Sha Control Area and other trunk roads, and the radio re-broadcasting system in road tunnels to alert drivers to the latest updates on traffic incidents.