

LCQ11: Arrangement for emergency temporary fresh water supply

Following is a question by the Hon Alice Mak and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (June 20):

Question:

Some residents of the Tsing Yi District have complained to me that last month, the fresh water supply to a number of public rental housing estates in the District was disrupted due to fresh water mains burst, but not until three and four hours respectively after the burst incident did the water tanks and water wagons deployed by the Water Supplies Department (WSD) to the District to provide emergency temporary fresh water supply arrive, and the quantity of water supplied by them was also inadequate. Regarding the arrangement for emergency temporary fresh water supply, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective current numbers of water tanks and water wagons under the WSD, together with a breakdown by the operational region (i.e. Hong Kong and Islands, Kowloon, New Territories West and New Territories East) to which they belong;
- (2) whether the WSD has drawn up a performance pledge that upon learning that the normal water supply to a certain area has been disrupted, an adequate quantity of fresh water must be supplied temporarily to the area within a certain period of time; if so, of the details; if not, whether the WSD will draw up such a performance pledge;
- (3) of the average time taken by the WSD in the past three years to deploy water tanks and water wagons respectively to areas in which normal water supply was disrupted, and set out the relevant figures by operational region;
- (4) whether the WSD has reviewed if the time taken to deploy water tanks or water wagons was too long; if the WSD has reviewed and the outcome is in the affirmative, of the reasons for that, whether insufficient emergency temporary water supply facilities was one of the causes, and of the authorities' improvement measures; and
- (5) how the WSD assesses, after confirming the need to supply fresh water to a certain area temporarily, the number of water tanks or water wagons needed to be deployed?

Reply:

President,

When the Water Supplies Department (WSD) suspends fresh water supply for repair of bursting or leaking of water mains, the Department will assess the duration of suspension required. If it is expected that the supply of fresh water will be suspended for more than three hours, the Department will arrange for the provision of emergency temporary water supply, including standpipes, water wagons and/or water tanks, to the affected residents within three hours after the suspension of fresh water supply.

According to records, the WSD received report of a fresh water main burst at Chung Mei Road, Tsing Yi at 6.28pm on May 17. Staff was deployed to the site to isolate the bursting fresh water main for repair immediately. The bursting fresh water main was completely isolated at 7.45pm, and the supply of fresh water to seven buildings in Cheung Hong Estate and Cheung Ching Estate was therefore suspended. The WSD delivered the first batch of eight water tanks to the affected buildings at 8.30pm to provide emergency temporary fresh water for the residents. The remaining two water wagons and the second batch of eight water tanks were also delivered successively to the site from 9.30pm to 12.06am.

My response to the five parts of the Hon Mak's question is as follows:

(1) The WSD normally provides emergency temporary fresh water supply in the form of standpipes, water wagons and/or water tanks. The standpipes will be installed on site. The distribution of water wagons and water tanks in various regions of the WSD is tabulated below:

	Number of water wagon	Number of water tank
Hong Kong and Islands Region	2	58
Kowloon Region	2	14
New Territories East Region	2	54
New Territories West Region	4	62

Note: The water wagons and water tanks in each region can be mobilised across regions to provide support.

(2) The WSD's current performance pledge on provision of emergency temporary fresh water supply is as follows:

Performance Pledge	Target
Provision of emergency temporary fresh water supply after isolation of burst main	Attain 85% within 3 hours

Note 1: If fresh water supply interruption is expected to last for not more than three hours, the WSD will normally not provide emergency temporary fresh water supply.

Note 2: The WSD has been able to meet the target since the establishment of

the performance pledge in 2013.

(3) In the past three years, the average time required for the provision of emergency temporary fresh water supply (including standpipes, water wagons and/or water tanks) after the closure of burst water mains in various regions of the WSD is tabulated below:

	2015	2016	2017
Hong Kong and Islands Region	0.65 hours	0.62 hours	0.71 hours
Kowloon Region	0.50 hours	0.32 hours	0.30 hours
New Territories East Region	1.05 hours	1.35 hours	1.50 hours
New Territories West Region	0.31 hours	0.44 hours	0.40 hours

Standpipes, which are installed on-site, can provide emergency temporary fresh water supply more quickly. The WSD has no separate statistics on the time required to deliver water wagons and water tanks for provision of emergency temporary fresh water supply.

(4) The WSD reviews regularly the arrangement of providing emergency temporary fresh water supply. The latest enhancement measure, which will be on trial run in mid-June this year, is to arrange water wagons drivers to work outside office hours and standby till evening, instead of requiring them to be on stand-by. This will expedite the delivery of water wagons to provide emergency temporary fresh water supply.

(5) Depending on the site situation, the WSD will decide whether to provide emergency temporary water supply in the form of standpipes, water wagons and/or water tanks. Also, the WSD has internal guidelines for assessing the number of water wagons and water tanks required. The assessment will generally take into account various factors such as the number of affected residents and the duration and time of the water supply suspension.