

LCQ12: Security Personnel Permit

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Han-pan and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (March 13):

Question:

Currently, security personnel performing guarding work not requiring the carrying of arms and ammunition must be holders of either a Category A or Category B Security Personnel Permit (SPP), and persons aged 71 or above can only apply for Category A SPPs, i.e. they can only perform guarding work for single private residential buildings. Some members of the industry hope that the Government can relax the relevant restriction on account of factors such as the manpower shortage, ageing population, and improving health of the elderly, so that persons aged 71 or above can apply for Category B SPPs. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the current number of SPP holders in Hong Kong, together with a breakdown by permit category (i.e. Category A and Category B); whether it has estimated the number of security personnel who need to change to apply for Category A SPPs upon reaching the age of 71 or above in each of the coming five years;

(2) whether it will review the existing arrangement under which security personnel aged 71 or above can only perform Category A guarding work for single private residential buildings; and

(3) as it is learnt that there are fewer jobs for Category A guarding work in the market, whether the authorities will consider relaxing the upper age limit for Category B SPP applications, so that persons aged 71 or above can apply for Category B SPPs; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Security and Guarding Services Ordinance (Cap. 460) (the Ordinance) was enacted by the Government in 1994 to provide for a regulatory regime for the security services industry. The Security and Guarding Services Industry Authority (SGSIA), established under the Ordinance to regulate the security industry, is a statutory body responsible for formulating the criteria and conditions for issuing a security personnel permit (SPP), including setting the upper age limits for SPP applications. The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) is responsible for issuing SPPs to individuals performing security work.

There are four categories of SPPs, namely Categories A, B, C and D, classified according to the different types of security work and requirements

for security personnel. A Category A SPP is for general guarding work not requiring the carrying of arms and ammunition for a single private residential building. There is no upper age limit due to the relatively simple job nature and requirements. A Category B SPP is for all other general guarding work not requiring the carrying of arms and ammunition. As various types of premises and a wider range of job duties are involved, the upper age limit of Category B SPP holders is 70 (i.e. those who have reached the age of 70 are not allowed to perform Category B security work). In issuing the SPPs, the HKPF allows all persons permitted to perform Category B security work to perform Category A security work as well.

In consultation with the HKPF and the SGSIA, my reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) As at February 29, 2024, there were 360 607 SPP holders in Hong Kong, of which 19 074 were permitted to perform Category A security work only, and 335 084 were permitted to perform both Category A and Category B security work. When a Category B SPP holder reaches the age of 70, he/she can continue to perform Category A security work within the validity period of the SPP and need not apply for another SPP, but he/she must cease performing Category B security work.

According to police records, among the above 335 084 SPP holders permitted to perform Category B security work, the number of persons who will reach the age of 70 and only be allowed to perform Category A security work in each of the next five years is as follows:

Year	Number of persons reaching the age of 70
2025	6 632
2026	7 932
2027	9 535
2028	10 954
2029	12 211

(2) and (3) To ensure the quality of security services, when formulating the criteria for issuing Category A SPP, the SGSIA has taken into consideration that the fitness requirement for security personnel performing security work for a single private residential building is relatively lenient and therefore no upper age limit has been set for Category A SPP holders. In contrast, a Category B SPP is for security work in various types of premises including housing estates, shopping centres, commercial buildings and industrial buildings, which requires a certain degree of physical ability, alertness and technological know-how of the SPP holders. It is therefore necessary to set an upper age limit. The SGSIA communicates with the industry regularly to understand its needs and opinions, and reviews the criteria and conditions for issuing SPPs from time to time. In fact, in 2015, in the light of the demographic changes in Hong Kong and the demand for labour in the market, the SGSIA raised the upper age limit for Category B SPP holders from 65 to 70

upon consultation with the industry.

On account of the actual operation and needs of the security and guarding services industry, as well as the opinions of different stakeholders, the SGSIA considers restricting a Category A SPP holder to work for a single private residential building under the existing arrangement appropriate. In addition, to ensure that Category B SPP holders possess the required level of physical ability and capability to perform their duties, it is not advisable to raise the relevant upper age limit for the time being. The SGSIA will monitor closely the development of the industry and continue to communicate with the industry stakeholders.