

# LCQ13: Working environment of frontline cleansing workers of FEHD

Following is a question by the Hon Lam Chun-sing and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (November 27):

Question:

Regarding the working environment of frontline cleansing workers of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information on each permanent off-street refuse collection point (RCP) currently managed by the FEHD: (a) the district in which it is located, (b) its name, (c) the name of the outsourced service contractor, (d) the staffing establishment and (e) strength (with a breakdown by post), and (f) the number of staff convenience facilities provided (including (i) individual rest room, (ii) table, (iii) chair, (iv) locker (the total number of compartments available for staff), (v) power socket, (vi) electric fan, (vii) air-conditioning device, (viii) cold and hot water dispenser, (ix) microwave oven, (x) electric steamer, (xi) refrigerator, (xii) individual changing room, (xiii) toilet facility, and (xiv) shower cubicle) (set out in the table below);

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)		
					(i)	.....	(xiv)

(2) as it is learnt that some frontline cleansing workers of the FEHD responsible for street cleaning are required to report for duty at designated roll-call points before work every day, of the locations and floor areas of such roll-call points, the RCPs in which the report-for-duty workers are working, and the daily numbers of workers reporting for duty at such roll-call points (set out in a table by district across the territory);

(3) as there are views pointing out that the sweat-wicking and breathability properties of uniforms currently provided for and required to be worn by frontline cleansing workers responsible for street cleaning are inadequate, which increase the risk of heat stress faced by such workers while working in hot weather, whether the authorities will consider reviewing and improving the materials of the uniforms concerned, so as to enhance the protection of workers' occupational safety and health;

(4) as it is learnt that the FEHD has commenced an RCP refurbishment scheme since 2020 to upgrade or provide additional rest rooms and relevant

facilities for RCP staff, of the following information on the RCPs involved in the scheme: (i) the districts in which they are located, (ii) their names, (iii) the dates on which the works are expected to commence/have commenced, and (iv) the expected/actual completion dates of works, together with a breakdown by the progress of works (i.e. works completed, works in progress, detailed design underway and preliminary planning underway);

(5) of the following information on the 900 or so village-type RCPs or RCPs with temporary structures currently managed by the FEHD: the districts in which they are located and their locations, and the number of mobile cleansing teams responsible for such RCPs, as well as their respective staffing establishment and strength (set out by post);

(6) as it is learnt that in order to enhance the resting environment of frontline cleansing workers in rural areas, the FEHD has installed solar cooling kiosks (kiosks) at some locations and provided similar solar-powered facilities in staff resting places with no electricity supply in rural areas, of the following information on each of (i) the kiosks installed or planned to be installed, and (ii) the resting places with solar-powered facilities provided or planned to be provided: the district in which it is located, its location, the name of the nearest village-type RCP and the walking distance (if applicable), as well as the dates on which the works are expected to be completed or have been completed (set out in a table); and

(7) as it is learnt that fully enclosed on-board refuse bin cleaners (RBCs) are put on trial by the FEHD at designated rural locations, of the following information on such RBCs: the number of RBCs in operation so far, the number and locations of the designated rural locations with RBCs on trial, as well as the actual number of refuse bins cleaned per day by each RBC and its percentage in the total number of refuse bins at rural locations; whether the authorities have plans to extend the use of RBC to more rural locations; if so, of the details, including the proposed locations and timetable for the extended use of RBCs; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to the working and resting environment of frontline cleansing workers, including civil servants and outsourced service contractor workers, who provide essential public services for the community. Since the inauguration of the incumbent Government, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has conducted a comprehensive review of the arrangements for accommodating the basic needs of frontline cleansing workers, including drinking water, areas for short breaks, water for cleansing tools and toilet facilities, and confirmed that the needs of all frontline cleansing workers had been accommodated. Subject to objective conditions, the FEHD will strive to further improve the working condition of workers and provide more convenient staff facilities through refurbishment or facelifting of refuse collection points (RCPs).

My reply to the question raised by the Hon Lam Chun-sing is as follows:

(1) At present, the FEHD manages 163 off-street RCPs which refuse collection vehicles can enter, instead of on the roadside, to collect refuse. Different facilities are provided in these RCPs for workers' use. The number of facilities provided at off-street RCPs as at November 2024 are set out at Annex 1. The FEHD has, in collaboration with the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD), progressively conducted comprehensive refurbishment and facelifting works for older off-street RCPs. Resting rooms and relevant facilities will be provided as far as possible, subject to the actual circumstances of the venues. The FEHD will continue to review and improve the facilities to cater for the actual needs of frontline staff.

The manpower of RCPs, depending on their actual opening hours, is provided on one to three work shifts, with one RCP attendant deployed on each shift.

(2) All frontline cleansing workers of the FEHD, including civil servants and outsourced service contractor workers (about 9 900 in number), need to sign-in and sign-off at roll-call points. Apart from off-street RCPs, roll-call points are also set up at suitable places near the working sites, such as offices at Municipal Services Buildings, market offices and attendant rooms of public toilets. Locations of roll-call points for the staff responsible for street cleansing services are provided at Annex 2. The FEHD does not keep a breakdown for other items inquired about at sub-question (2).

(3) In 2019, the FEHD, in collaboration with local academic institutions, developed and designed new working uniforms made from materials with the functions of moisture management, aeration and light reflection. At present, all frontline civil servants and outsourced service contractor workers responsible for street cleansing are provided with such working uniforms. In future, the FEHD will keep an eye on the availability of materials of better performance in the market.

(4) Starting from 2020-2021, the FEHD has been, in co-operation with the ArchSD, proactively taking forward the full refurbishment/facelifting programme for RCPs. So far, the full refurbishment/facelifting works for 18 off-street RCPs have been completed, the works for three RCPs have been/will be commenced, while the works for 30 RCPs are under detailed design and the works for another 10 RCPs are under active planning. The relevant information is provided at Annex 3.

(5) Generally speaking, for village-type RCPs/RCPs with temporary structures, their daily cleansing is carried out by street cleansing workers of the beats concerned. Street cleansing of village beat is generally performed by one worker each on day shift only. The village-type RCPs/RCPs with temporary structures in various districts are listed at Annex 4.

(6) At present, the FEHD has installed 63 solar cooling kiosks (locations at Annex 5) and provided similar solar-powered facilities in 15 existing staff resting places in rural areas (locations at Annex 6). In planning the

provision of the staff resting places or solar cooling kiosks, the FEHD has taken into account the working areas and arrangements for the relevant cleansing workers in order to facilitate their use.

The FEHD plans to install 64 more solar cooling kiosks (locations at Annex 7) and provide staff resting facilities at 13 appropriate village-type RCPs (locations at Annex 8) in early 2025. It will continue to review and enhance these facilities to meet the actual needs of frontline staff.

(7) The FEHD is putting on trial a fully enclosed on-board refuse bin cleaner, which is capable of washing about five 660-litre waste containers per hour, in the Islands District. If the trial result is satisfactory and subject to the ground situation of different rural locations, the FEHD may incorporate the use of such cleaners into the terms of street cleansing service contracts upon their renewal.