

LCQ16: Aviation security at Hong Kong International Airport

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, in the Legislative Council today (June 13):

Question:

Pursuant to the guidelines of the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Hong Kong International Airport has implemented new security requirements for cabin baggage since March 21, 2007. Such requirements include: all travellers carrying liquids, gels and aerosols should have them carried in containers with a capacity not greater than 100 ml; any container with a capacity greater than 100 millilitres (ml), even if it is not fully filled with the aforesaid articles, will not be accepted. Travellers who carry with them articles which do not meet the aforesaid requirement must follow the instructions of security screening officers at the security screening check point by either discarding such articles or checking in the baggage concerned before they may pass the security screening. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of cases in each of the past five years in which travellers insisted on carrying on board an aircraft articles which did not meet the aforesaid requirement; the procedure followed by security screening officers in handling such cases;

(2) whether the travellers mentioned in (1) committed any criminal offence; if so, of the penalty concerned, as well as the respective numbers of prosecutions and convictions in each of the past five years and the penalties imposed on the convicted persons; and

(3) whether a mechanism is in place to (i) ensure that security screening officers perform duties pursuant to the law and (ii) review the workflow at the security screening check point on a regular basis to ensure that there is no security loophole; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to the aviation security at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA). According to the requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), all liquids, aerosols and gels (LAGs) carried by passengers shall be contained in containers with capacity not exceeding 100 millilitres (ml). Any container with a capacity greater than 100 ml, even if it is only partially filled with LAGs, must not be brought into the restricted area of the airport. The requirement is

applicable to the HKIA, and the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) is responsible for its implementation, to ensure that the LAGs carried by all passengers comply with the said requirement.

Based on the information provided by the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) and the AAHK, my reply to Hon Kenneth Leung's question is as follows:

(1) & (2) The AAHK, responsible for the operations of the HKIA, shall ensure that the cabin baggage carried by all departing passengers complies with the relevant security requirements of the ICAO. If a passenger is found carrying any container with a capacity exceeding 100 ml with LAGs inside, the security personnel will take out the relevant item, display to the passenger an information sheet containing the relevant security requirement, and advise the passenger how the item may be handled, including disposal at the scene or returning the item to the airline's check-in counter for checking in as hold baggage, etc., and the passenger should not be allowed to carry such an item into the restricted area of the airport. This security requirement is a direction given by the Director-General of Civil Aviation to the AAHK pursuant to section 37(1)(a) of the Aviation Security Ordinance (Cap 494). The AAHK must implement it as required by the law. For the incident on May 21, 2018, the CAD has requested the AAHK to submit a report, so as to ensure the LAGs carried by all passengers fulfil the requirement of the ICAO, and prevent recurrence of similar incidents. According to the information provided by the AAHK and its subsidiary, the Aviation Security Company Limited (AVSECO), there was no record of other similar incidents in the past five years.

(3) For any aviation security-related incident at the airport, the AVSECO as the aviation security service provider at the airport will conduct investigation and submit a report to the AAHK, including whether human errors were involved, and how the case was handled. Upon examination of the report, the AAHK will submit a report to the CAD, including recommendations and improvement measures to prevent recurrence of similar incidents. The CAD will also proactively initiate audits on compliance with the aviation security requirements. If it is discovered that an organisation does not fully fulfil the security requirements issued by the CAD, the latter will require the organisation to submit and implement improvement plans.