

LCQ16: Cleaning and emergency rescue services provided at designated camp sites

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Lau and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (May 30):

Question:

In recent years, more and more Hong Kong people and Mainland tourists go camping in the rural New Territories to get close to nature, filling most of the popular camp sites (e.g. Ham Tin Wan Campsite) with a hubbub from boisterous campers and overloading the relevant facilities during long holidays. On the other hand, some villagers in the vicinity of the camp sites have relayed to me that some campers litter and cause environmental hygiene problems. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective quantities of refuse collected each month in the past three years at the 41 designated camp sites provided in country parks throughout Hong Kong;

(2) whether it has deployed staff to conduct regular inspections on the hygiene conditions at the various designated camp sites and ticketed persons who littered; if so, of the number of persons ticketed in the past three years;

(3) of the plans to step up its efforts in reminding campers to care for nature and public property;

(4) whether it will review the usage of the various designated camp sites and provide more facilities at the camp sites; if so, of the timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(5) as it has been reported that the various designated camp sites have not been equipped with first aid facilities such as automated external defibrillators, whether the authorities will provide first aid facilities at designated camp sites so that campers who are injured or suffer from bouts of illness may receive first aid treatment; if not, of the reasons for that; and

(6) as one has to tramp over hill and dale in order to go to Ham Tin Wan Campsite and Sai Wan Campsite at present, which is time consuming, whether the authorities will provide landing facilities near these two camp sites to make them conveniently accessible by sea, so as to facilitate cleaning workers to clean up refuse and ambulance personnel to transfer campers who are injured or suffer from bouts of illness to hospital for medical treatment; if so, of the timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Kenneth Lau is as follows:

(1) The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) deploys its staff or contractors to collect litter along hiking trails, at coastal areas and various recreation sites (e.g. campsites, barbecue sites and picnic sites) within country parks. Since litter is mostly collected from the recreation sites and their adjacent country park areas in one go, the AFCD does not have a separate breakdown of the amount of litter collected at designated campsites in country parks. In the past three years, the total amount of litter collected in country parks is as follows:

Year	Tonnes
2015	3 700
2016	3 400
2017	3 400

(2) The AFCD conducts regular patrol at country parks and their respective recreation facilities, including designated campsites. The AFCD staff will pay attention to the hygiene conditions of the areas during patrol and step up cleansing when needed. If non-compliance behaviour such as littering is detected, law enforcement action will be taken. In the past three years, the AFCD instituted 257 prosecutions against littering in country parks and special areas. However, the AFCD does not have a separate breakdown of prosecution figures for cases at designated campsites.

(3) The AFCD encourages the public to carry out recreation activities that are compatible with the environment in country parks, so as to nurture a sense of responsibility towards the environment while enjoying the outdoor activities. The AFCD has displayed camping codes at the designated campsites in country parks to remind campers of the good practices. The AFCD also disseminates relevant information on its website to encourage campers to plan ahead and get prepared before they go camping, and to adopt environmentally friendly measures. These include measures under the concept of "Leave No Trace", including the proper disposal of waste, preserving the naturalness of the environment, minimising the impact from use of fires, respecting wildlife and other visitors, etc. The "Hints for Campers" and "Green Tips for Campers" are available at the following websites:

www.afcd.gov.hk/english/country/cou_vis/cou_vis_cam/cou_vis_rec_hin.html and www.natureintouch.gov.hk/outdoor/activity/nit_2011/0/762.

Besides, the AFCD promotes the relevant codes through publicity and education activities from time to time, such as organising "Go Green Family Camping", roving exhibitions at shopping malls and nature appreciation activities. The AFCD will continue to strengthen its publicity and education efforts, and maintain communication with Tourism Commission to promote to overseas visitors the good practices and codes of green tourism through

various channels (including Hong Kong Tourism Board).

(4) The AFCD reviews the usage of campsites from time to time, and improves the facilities and considers the provision of additional campsites according to the needs of the visitors and specific conditions of the sites. To address the public demand for camping activities, the AFCD has improved campsite services and facilities based on the usage of the campsites and their popularity, e.g. designating the Sai Wan Campsite and Tai Mong Tsai Campsite in Sai Kung in 2014 and 2015 respectively, carrying out turf improvement works of Wan Tsai Campsite in Sai Kung in 2016, and expanding the Chung Pui Campsite in 2017, etc.

Besides, the AFCD has commissioned a consultancy study on the enhancement of the recreation and education potential of country parks for public enjoyment. It is expected that public consultation on the recommendations of the study will commence in 2018.

(5) The AFCD attaches great importance to the safety of country park visitors. At present, all country parks visitor centres are equipped with first aid kits, whereas automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are available at four of these centres for the use of the public when needed. Besides, the Auxiliary Medical Service sets up first aid stations on Sundays and public holidays in country parks and its ambulance motorcycles will patrol country parks and provide first aid services. The first aid stations and ambulance motorcycles are equipped with the AEDs and will provide assistance to visitors as necessary.

Most of the designated campsites are located in the countryside with no offices and shelters. Therefore, there is practical difficulty in providing first aid supplies in the designated campsites. The AFCD will closely monitor the usage of the campsites in country parks and review if the facilities can meet visitors' needs from time to time, and provide the required facilities as far as practicable.

(6) There are currently two kaito routes connecting the vicinity of Sai Wan and Ham Tin Wan to Sai Kung, and there is already a landing facility available at Sai Wan. In consideration of the relevant development plans in the area of Sai Wan and Ham Tin Wan, the Transport and Housing Bureau has no plan to construct a new landing facility near Ham Tin Wan and Sai Wan Campsites at the present stage.

Litter collected in Ham Tin Wan Campsite and Sai Wan Campsite is removed from the sites by contractor's vessels. The operation is generally smooth. In addition, there are helipads in both Sai Wan and Ham Tin Wan for use in cases of emergency such as rescue.

It is never an easy task to manage countryside facilities in remote areas. Visitors could contribute to the upkeep of the environmental hygiene of the relevant sites by adopting the good habit of "Take Your Litter Home" promoted by the Government.