

## LCQ19: Quality of security personnel

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

Question:

Many members of the public have relayed that security personnel have long been in short supply and are of varied quality. Many buildings and estates, in a bid to ensure the deployment of security personnel on duty, have lowered their recruitment standards, leading to an increase in crime figures. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has plans to review the application criteria for Security Personnel Permits (SPPs); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will consider introducing a complaint mechanism, with the imposition of penalties or even revocation of SPPs for security personnel with serious dereliction of duty; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) given that currently employers can import security personnel through the Enhanced Supplementary Labour Scheme, how the authorities ensure that such imported foreign workers are suitable to work in the security industry?

Reply:

President,

The Security and Guarding Services Ordinance (Cap. 460) (the Ordinance) provides for a regulatory regime for the security services industry which has been operating effectively. Under the regime, all persons who provide security services for reward in Hong Kong must hold a Security Personnel Permit (SPP). The Security and Guarding Services Industry Authority (SGSIA) established under the Ordinance is responsible for formulating the criteria and conditions for issuing an SPP, and the Commissioner of Police (the Commissioner) may issue an SPP only to a person who meets the relevant criteria for providing security services.

In consultation with the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) and the SGSIA, my reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) To ensure the quality of security services, the criteria for issuing an SPP cover areas including age, fitness, character and proficiency in security work. The applicant must be of good character having regard to his employment history, criminal records and other relevant factors. The criteria have already incorporated the essential elements for regulating the security

services industry, and are useful for safeguarding that security personnel are physically fit to perform the job and satisfy the requirements for proficiency in security work, e.g. passing a course-end examination of a recognised security training course. The SGSIA will continue to monitor closely the development of the security services industry and their views, and review the criteria for issuing an SPP as appropriate in a timely manner.

(2) The HKPF attaches great importance to the performance of duties by security personnel in strict compliance with the law and the conditions of the SPPs. Upon receiving complaints relating to the discharge of duties by security personnel from the public, the Police will follow up the cases and conduct investigation. Based on the evidence and nature of each case, the Police will take suitable follow-up actions, such as deciding whether or not to issue warnings or pursue prosecutions. As regards serious cases, under the Ordinance, where, in the opinion of the Commissioner, a holder of an SPP is no longer a fit and proper person to hold the SPP or where the holder of an SPP has been in breach of any condition of the SPP, the Commissioner may apply to the SGSIA for a revocation or suspension of the SPP. The SGSIA may, upon consideration, determine whether or not to revoke the SPP or suspend the SPP for a certain period of time.

(3) Imported workers who wish to perform security work in Hong Kong must apply for an SPP in accordance with the Ordinance. This is to ensure that imported workers also comply with all the stipulated criteria and conditions for performing security work, including fulfilment of the "proficiency in security work" criterion. Imported workers can demonstrate their capability and proficiency in the skills/technique required in performing the job through either passing a trade test or a course-end examination of a security training course recognised by the SGSIA.