

FEHD orders restaurant in Tokwawan to suspend business for 14 days

The Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene has ordered a general restaurant in Tokwawan to suspend business for 14 days, as the operator repeatedly breached the Food Business Regulation (FBR) by changing the type of fuel used for its heating equipment without permission.

The restaurant, located on the ground floor of 86C and 86D Lok Shan Road, was ordered to suspend business from today (October 18) to October 31.

"Two convictions for the above-mentioned breach were recorded against the shop last December and this June. A total fine of \$4,000 was levied by the court and 15 demerit points were registered against the licensee under the department's demerit points system. The contraventions resulted in the 14-day licence suspension," a spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said.

The licensee of the restaurant had a record of two convictions for the same offence in July and November last year. A total fine of \$2,600 was levied and 15 demerit points were also registered, leading to a seven-day licence suspension during January and February this year.

The spokesman reminded the licensees of food premises to comply with the FBR and other relevant regulations, or their licences could be suspended or cancelled.

Licensed food premises are required to exhibit a sign, at a conspicuous place near the main entrance, indicating that the premises have been licensed. A list of licensed food premises is available on the FEHD's website (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/index.html).

LCQ13: Subdivided unit households who have not applied for public rental housing

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Wendy Hong and a written reply by the Secretary for Housing, Ms Winnie Ho, in the Legislative Council today (October 18):

Question:

According to the 2021 Population Census, over 100 000 households lived in subdivided units (SDUs) in Hong Kong, and the Report of the Task Force for the Study on Tenancy Control of SDUs published by the Transport and Housing Bureau in March 2021 revealed that nearly 50 per cent of SDU households had not applied for public rental housing (PRH). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has compiled statistics on the current number and percentage of sandwich class households with household income exceeding the income limit for PRH among the SDU households who have not applied for PRH;

(2) whether it has compiled statistics on the current number and percentage of households having household members who are non-Hong Kong residents (including Mainland residents holding Exit-entry Permits for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao as well as non-refoulement claimants) among the SDU households who have not applied for PRH;

(3) whether it has compiled statistics on (i) the number of sandwich class households with household income exceeding the income limit for PRH, and (ii) the number of households having household members who were non-Hong Kong residents mentioned in (2), among the households living in SDUs between 2016 and 2021, as well as their respective percentages in the SDU households who had not applied for PRH; and

(4) whether it has studied if, apart from the aforesaid reasons, there are other reasons why SDU households have not applied for PRH, together with the numbers and percentages of such households by reason?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has all along been paying attention to the housing needs of those who are inadequately housed. We are taking forward a series of measures, including the provision of about 20 000 transitional housing units and construction of about 30 000 Light Public Housing units, so as to provide more housing options for people who are currently inadequately housed, including those living in subdivided units (SDUs), to improve their living environment.

Having consulted the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the reply to various parts of the question raised by Dr the Hon Wendy Hong is as follows:

(1) to (3) According to thematic reports on persons living in SDUs in C&SD's 2021 Population Census and 2016 Population Bi-census, there were about 108 000 and 93 000 SDUs in Hong Kong in 2021 and 2016 respectively, accommodating about 216 000 and 210 000 persons. The relevant information reflecting the situation in 2021 is as follows:

(i) The median monthly household income of households living in SDUs was \$15,310, which was 13.4 per cent higher than \$13,500 in 2016. Among households living in SDUs, the monthly household income of 22.0 per cent (about 24 000 households) was below \$10,000, similar to that in 2016 (23.7 per cent; about 22 000 households); that of 24.5 per cent (about 26 000 households) was \$10,000 – \$14,999, significantly fewer than that in 2016 (35.6 per cent; about 33 000 households); that of 19.4 per cent (about 21 000 households) was \$15,000 – \$19,999, also fewer than that in 2016 (26.1 per cent; about 24 000 households); and that of 34.2 per cent (about 37 000 households) was \$20,000 and above, significantly more than that in 2016 (14.6 per cent; about 13 000 households);

(ii) Among persons living in SDUs, the majority was Chinese (87.6 per cent; about 188 000 persons), followed by South Asians (6.3 per cent; about 13 000 persons) and Filipinos (2.0 per cent; about 4 200 persons), largely similar to the situation in 2016; and

(iii) About one-fifth (21.2 per cent; about 23 000 households) of households living in SDUs had at least one household member from the Mainland having resided in Hong Kong for less than seven years, fewer than that in 2016 (25.6 per cent; about 24 000 households).

It is the objective of the Hong Kong Housing Authority to provide housing to low-income families who cannot afford to rent private accommodation. Households with income and assets below the prescribed limits are deemed to be low-income families who are unable to afford renting private accommodation, and hence are eligible to apply for public rental housing (PRH). The limits are assessed annually to keep them in line with the prevailing socio-economic circumstances. The income and asset limits for PRH application vary in accordance with the family size. The relevant details are at Annex. As the Government does not keep income information of SDU households by household size, the number of SDU households with household income exceeding the income limit of PRH application is not available. Furthermore, the Government does not keep information on the income of SDU households which have not applied for PRH and whether the relevant persons are Hong Kong residents.

(4) Persons living in SDUs may decide not to apply, or have not applied, for PRH with their own considerations or due to different reasons (including transportation and geographical location). Besides, PRH applicants must not own or co-own any domestic property in Hong Kong; while persons who are not granted the right to land in Hong Kong (e.g. Mainland residents holding Exit-entry Permits for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao as well as non-refoulement claimants) cannot be included in PRH applications either. Hence, when handling the SDU issue, the HKSAR Government has to carefully consider the impacts brought by relevant measures and formulate follow-up arrangement, so as to avoid displacing some SDU households who are not eligible for PRH to accommodation with higher rents, or even rendering them homeless.

LC: Speech by CS in presenting Government Minute in response to Report No. 80 of Public Accounts Committee

Following is the speech (translated from Chinese) by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, in presenting the Government Minute in response to Report No. 80 of the Public Accounts Committee in the Legislative Council today (October 18):

President,

Laid on the table today is the Government Minute (GM) responding to Report No. 80 of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) presented to the Legislative Council on July 12, 2023.

I welcome the Report of the PAC and am grateful for the time and efforts devoted by the Chairman of the PAC, the Hon Shiu Ka-fai, and members of the PAC. The Government accepts the PAC's various recommendations and sets out in detail in the GM the specific responses of the relevant bureaux and departments. The PAC has conducted public hearings on the chapter on "Maintenance and improvement of school premises for aided schools" in the Director of Audit's Report No. 80. I would like to highlight the key measures taken and progress made by the Government and relevant organisations in response to the recommendations.

As noted by the PAC, the Audit Commission examined the works carried out from 2020 to 2022, during which the daily operation of schools, including the maintenance and repair works in school premises, was greatly affected by the epidemic. The related works quality monitoring work was also delayed in certain months. As schools were closed intermittently, government staff and contractors could not enter the school premises to work. In addition, various anti-epidemic measures resulted in serious shortage of works personnel. This notwithstanding, the Education Bureau (EDB) endeavoured to maintain all necessary Emergency Repairs (ER) works and implemented improvement programmes in response to the anti-epidemic needs. Upon the easing of the epidemic, the EDB immediately caught up with the progress and, in some cases, went beyond the target. We are grateful for the recommendations of the Audit Commission and the PAC, which enable the EDB to further improve the mechanism so as to better assist schools in improving the learning and teaching environment.

As regards contract management, the EDB has completed a series of computer system enhancements to carry out the relevant work more effectively, including selection of Works Orders (WOs) for various types of audits,

reminding Term Consultants (TCs) to submit replies to audit cases, reminding the TCs to certify completion of the WOs, and recording detailed justifications for approval of repair applications. In addition, the EDB has strengthened existing guidelines or issued new guidance notes to assist the TCs in handling repair applications from schools and improving the quality of various repair reports.

Currently, all schools comply with the requirements of the National Flag and National Emblem Ordinance, as well as the requirements related to the display of the national flag and conduct of national flag raising ceremonies as set out in the EDB circular. The EDB pays great attention to the status of flagpoles on school premises. If a flagpole is so damaged that it cannot operate, the EDB will handle it without delay. The EDB updated the guidelines in May and July 2023, clearly requiring the TCs and schools to handle the repair works of flagpoles that are not in normal operation through the ER. The EDB will continue to examine the technical feasibility for schools that intend to install additional flagpoles and carry out the works for them wherever feasible.

The Government attaches great importance to the fact that there are still asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) in the building components in a small number of school buildings. The EDB launched a time-limited Asbestos Management Plan for School Premises in 2006 to engage professionals to remove the building components containing asbestos for schools in Hong Kong in accordance with the methods approved by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD). Such removal works were completed for more than 570 schools in Hong Kong. However, some schools indicated that as the remaining ACMs were concealed under the floor, the removal works would affect school operation. Professional assessment also confirmed that such ACMs would not pose danger to school users. The schools thus chose to remove the ACMs together with other works items during Major Repairs (MR) works. The EDB liaised closely with these schools and appointed professionals for the schools to closely monitor the building components with the ACMs in accordance with the EPD guidelines. The latest regular inspection completed in February this year confirmed that all building components with the ACMs were in good condition and would not pose safety hazard. With the co-ordination of the EDB, the remaining 11 schools have submitted applications for removing the building components with the ACMs through the 2024-2025 MR or ER mechanism. The EDB will continue to maintain close liaison with these schools to ensure that the required works will be completed in good time.

As for the thresholds for the minimum repair cost for applications by aided schools, the EDB has commenced the review and aims to complete it within the 2023/24 school year.

President, I would like to thank the PAC again for its efforts and suggestions. The bureaux and departments concerned will strictly adhere to their responses and implement the improvement measures set out in the GM.

Thank you, President.

LCQ14: Services of accident and emergency departments of public hospitals

Following is a question by the Hon Michael Tien and a written reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (October 18):

Question:

The extension of the accident and emergency department (AED) of Tuen Mun Hospital officially commenced service in June this year. However, the current waiting time at that AED is frequently criticised by residents in the district as overly long. Regarding the services of the AEDs of public hospitals, will the Government inform this Council if it knows:

- (1) the respective attendances and staffing establishments of the AEDs of the 18 public hospitals under the Hospital Authority (HA) in the past three years (set out in a table);
- (2) the projected and actual population served by the AED of Tuen Mun Hospital;
- (3) the respective average waiting times for non-urgent patients at the AED of Tuen Mun Hospital in the three years preceding its expansion and since its expansion;
- (4) the respective average waiting times at the AEDs of Pok Oi Hospital and Tin Shui Wai Hospital under the New Territories West Cluster in the past three years; and
- (5) whether HA has studied how to shorten the waiting time at the AED of Tuen Mun Hospital?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Hospital Authority (HA), the reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Michael Tien is as follows:

At present, there are 18 public hospitals under the HA providing Accident and Emergency (A&E) services for the critically ill or seriously injured people and victims of disasters. To ensure that citizens with urgent needs can receive timely services, A&E departments implement a patient triage

system under which patients are classified into five categories, namely Critical, Emergency, Urgent, Semi-urgent and Non-urgent based on their clinical conditions, and will receive treatment as prioritised by their urgency category. The HA's service target specifies that Critical patients will receive immediate treatment, and most Emergency (95 per cent) and Urgent (90 per cent) patients will be treated within 15 or 30 minutes respectively.

Tables 1 and 2 below show the number of A&E attendances and manpower deployment of A&E departments in the 18 public hospitals under the HA over the past three years (Note):

Table 1: Number of A&E attendances from 2020-21 to 2022-23

Cluster	Hospital	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Hong Kong East	Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital	96 651	104 604	102 608
	Ruttonjee Hospital	51 825	60 506	56 652
	St. John Hospital	6 591	7 354	7 299
Hong Kong West	Queen Mary Hospital	98 145	107 820	100 469
Kowloon Central	Kwong Wah Hospital	93 032	101 485	102 823
	Queen Elizabeth Hospital	145 318	166 131	155 064
Kowloon East	Tseung Kwan O Hospital	93 262	103 913	99 970
	United Christian Hospital	124 778	140 273	132 023
Kowloon West	Caritas Medical Centre	98 338	108 148	96 465
	North Lantau Hospital	63 007	79 889	71 653
	Princess Margaret Hospital	92 055	109 389	100 105
	Yan Chai Hospital	100 572	112 240	97 029
New Territories East	Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital	76 884	86 503	81 241
	North District Hospital	71 733	76 342	78 810
	Prince of Wales Hospital	121 640	143 163	141 250
New Territories West	Pok Oi Hospital	76 996	82 447	82 498
	Tuen Mun Hospital	126 828	142 785	141 892
	Tin Shui Wai Hospital	102 798	107 037	93 240
Total		1 640 453	1 840 029	1 741 091

Table 2: Number of A&E doctors calculated on full-time equivalent basis from 2020-21 to 2022-23

Cluster	Hospital	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Hong Kong East	Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital	38	35	33
	Ruttonjee Hospital	19	19	17
	St. John Hospital	6	5	5
Hong Kong West	Queen Mary Hospital	32	30	26
Kowloon Central	Kwong Wah Hospital	30	31	33
	Queen Elizabeth Hospital	48	53	52
Kowloon East	Tseung Kwan O Hospital	26	28	28
	United Christian Hospital	47	47	44
Kowloon West	Caritas Medical Centre	29	27	31
	North Lantau Hospital	31	28	27
	Princess Margaret Hospital	34	33	36
	Yan Chai Hospital	34	33	30
New Territories East	Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital	23	23	23
	North District Hospital	21	21	22
	Prince of Wales Hospital	33	39	38
New Territories West	Pok Oi Hospital	24	22	23
	Tuen Mun Hospital	43	43	47
	Tin Shui Wai Hospital	26	25	25
Total*		545	543	540

* Figures are rounded to the nearest whole number and may not add up to the total due to rounding

At present, the HA provides services according to clusters, among which the New Territories West Cluster (NTWC) provides public hospital services for residents of Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. According to the latest population estimates by the Census and Statistics Department and the Planning Department, the mid-year population of the Tuen Mun and Yuen Long districts in 2022 was 1 167 000.

Hospitals under the NTWC include Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH), Pok Oi Hospital (POH), Castle Peak Hospital, Siu Lam Hospital and Tin Shui Wai Hospital (TSWH), among which TMH, POH and TSWH provide A&E services for residents.

Tables 3 to 5 below show the average waiting time of A&E services for each triage category of the NTWC over the past three years (Note). When comparing the throughput of services provided by the HA across the years, it should be noted that in view of the COVID-19 epidemic situation, the HA

adjusted its services in response to the epidemic since early 2020:

Table 3: Average waiting time of A&E services for each triage category of the NTWC in 2020-21 (minutes)

Hospital	Priority 1 (Critical)	Priority 2 (Emergency)	Priority 3 (Urgent)	Priority 4 (Semi-urgent)	Priority 5 (Non-urgent)
POH	0	6	19	125	161
TMH	0	6	24	150	156
TSWH	0	4	13	83	104

Table 4: Average waiting time of A&E services for each triage category of the NTWC in 2021-22 (minutes)

Hospital	Priority 1 (Critical)	Priority 2 (Emergency)	Priority 3 (Urgent)	Priority 4 (Semi-urgent)	Priority 5 (Non-urgent)
POH	0	7	20	156	191
TMH	0	7	27	151	154
TSWH	0	5	14	132	165

Table 5: Average waiting time of A&E services for each triage category of the NTWC in 2022-23 (minutes)

Hospital	Priority 1 (Critical)	Priority 2 (Emergency)	Priority 3 (Urgent)	Priority 4 (Semi-urgent)	Priority 5 (Non-urgent)
POH	0	6	19	118	156
TMH	0	7	26	135	136
TSWH	0	6	15	136	168

Overall, the average waiting time for Critical, Emergency, Urgent patients in each acute hospital of the NTWC meets the service targets specified by the HA.

To further improve the service quality and waiting time of A&E services, the HA has actively implemented a series of measures including:

(1) Strengthening manpower for doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and supporting staff, and continuously implementing measures including the Special Honorarium Scheme, leave encashment, etc. to enhance manpower of A&E departments so as to increase service capacity;

(2) Enhancing support to A&E departments from geriatric departments and setting up observation areas in A&E departments to reduce unnecessary hospital admissions; and

(3) Centrally publishing the waiting time of A&E departments of public hospitals through multiple platforms, including the HA website, "HA Go" mobile application and A&E registration counters, to strengthen communication with the public and manage public expectations about the waiting time of A&E departments, such that patients with mild illnesses can obtain information on the overall service situation of A&E departments before setting off to A&E departments or registering and hence decide whether to seek medical treatment in A&E departments.

The HA will continue to keep a close watch on the needs of Tuen Mun and Yuen Long residents for public healthcare services, and regularly look into the complementation of healthcare resources and manpower with a view to developing various services as necessary. Meanwhile, the Government will continue to encourage citizens to make more use of primary healthcare and family doctor services in the community with a view to relieving the pressure on public A&E services effectively, such that A&E departments can better focus on management of critical cases and emergency service while serving as a safety net for all.

Note: This refers to the financial year, i.e. from April 1 to March 31 of the following year.

[LCQ15: Enhancing flood prevention ability](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Starry Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (October 18):

Question:

Hong Kong was hard hit by severe rainstorms last month, and the Government had made its first-ever "extreme conditions" announcement. It has been reported that traffic was half paralysed due to severe flooding in widespread locations, such as MTR stations, shopping malls and trunk roads. With the number of storm surges and rainfall records constantly hitting new highs in recent years, some members of the public are worried that extreme weather may become the norm. Regarding enhancing Hong Kong's flood prevention ability, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the plans in place to review and enhance the capacity of stormwater

drainage systems in various districts, in order to cope with the risks brought about by extreme weather; whether it will consider streamlining the relevant consultancy study, engineering design and works procedures, so as to expedite the implementation of improvement works for such systems;

(2) whether it will give due consideration to the risks brought about by extreme weather in designing and planning the infrastructure facilities of new development areas, including increasing vegetation coverage, constructing higher dams, improving the stormwater drainage systems and enhancing flood prevention ability of buildings, etc;

(3) of the plans in place to review the ability of various low-lying areas in coping with extreme weather; whether the Government will accord priority to improving the stormwater drainage systems in such areas;

(4) whether it has plans to review the existing design guidelines governing the flood discharge capacity of underground car parks, basements of shopping malls, etc, with a view to reducing flooding at these locations during heavy rainstorms; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) whether it will step up publicity and education to further raise public awareness of flood prevention; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong was affected by successive heavy rainstorms in recent months. The Hong Kong Observatory issued the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal on the evening of September 7. Afterwards, the rain became intense and heavy. The Hong Kong Observatory Headquarters even recorded an hourly rainfall of 158.1 millimetres, which was the highest since records began in 1884. From September to the present (as at October 12), the cumulative rainfall recorded by the Hong Kong Observatory has reached 1 500 mm, accounting for about 60 per cent of the annual average rainfall. Even in face of the abovementioned highly intense rainstorm, the overall drainage capability of Hong Kong's stormwater drainage system had still served its purpose, which allowed the community to resume normal operation within the shortest period of time.

When the Hong Kong Observatory forecasted that there will be heavy rains, the Drainage Services Department (DSD) will deploy inspection teams in advance to locations susceptible to flooding to inspect and clear any clogged stormwater drainage system swiftly. In addition, whenever a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal, or a Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above is issued, the DSD will immediately activate the Emergency Control Centre and deploy additional emergency response teams according to rainfall and flooding conditions in each district to deal with flooding incidents and clear blocked drains and river channels. After a heavy rainstorm, the DSD will also proactively inspect major drains and river channels, remove obstructions such as debris, leaves and garbage, and carry out emergency repairs so as to

prepare for the next rainstorm.

The reply to the Hon Starry Lee's question is as follows:

(1) and (3) The design of Hong Kong's stormwater drainage system is comparable to advanced international cities such as Singapore, Tokyo and London with the standard of some of the facilities excel those of the said cities. The DSD has all along been making persistent efforts to enhance the drainage capacity of the stormwater drainage facilities. Currently there are 11 on-going stormwater drainage improvement projects, including construction of stormwater drains and underground stormwater storage tanks, and another 18 flood prevention/stormwater drainage improvement projects under planning. In response to the recent flooding incidents, we are reviewing the implementation priorities of the planned stormwater drainage improvement projects with a view to improving the areas with higher flooding risk (such as Eastern District of Hong Kong Island, Wong Tai Sin District and other low-lying areas) as soon as possible. In addition, the DSD will also adopt all feasible methods such as adopting parallel tendering when seeking funding from the Legislative Council to shorten the duration of engineering design, procurement and construction for commencing and completing the improvement works as soon as possible.

(2) Climate change is a global problem faced by the world. Hong Kong must also adopt a forward-looking strategy to actively respond to this challenge. In order to strengthen Hong Kong's flood prevention capabilities to cope with climate change, the DSD updated its Stormwater Drainage Manual in August 2022 with reference to the sixth assessment report published by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2021. This updated manual provides the latest data and guidelines, including design requirements for the rainfall increase and sea level rise associated with climate change, for designing and planning of stormwater drainage infrastructures.

The DSD also actively recommends the adoption of "blue-green infrastructure" design elements, including flood lakes, rain gardens, green roofs and other green facilities, in new development areas so as to reduce the burden of drainage facilities and hence enhance the city's flood resilience.

In order to further cope with the more frequent extreme weather events in recent years, the DSD has made advance arrangements and commenced a "Strategic Planning Study on Flood Management Against Sea Level Rise and Extreme Rainfall" in 2022. The study purpose is to assess the impact of climate change on Hong Kong's stormwater drainage systems till the end of the century and formulate new and comprehensive territory-wide flood management strategies. This study is expected to be completed in 2024.

(4) The DSD from time to time will liaise with property management companies in districts and provide technical advice on prevention of flood in facilities such as underground car parks and basements, including optimising their drainage design, and implementing drainage improvement measures such as installing water pumps, flood warning systems, and flood barriers.

(5) The DSD has been promoting and educating the public about flood risks and precautionary measures through TV Announcements in the Public Interest, publications, emergency drills and other activities such as opening the DSD's flood prevention facilities for public visits and outreach educational programmes, with a view to enhancing their awareness of flood prevention and emergency preparedness. In addition, the DSD has set up a 24-hour hotline 2300 1110. Members of the public can call the hotline to report flooding cases so that the DSD can handle them as quickly as possible.