

LCQ7: Manpower of the Police for tackling technology crimes

Following is a question by the Hon Duncan Chiu and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (July 17):

Question:

In order to combat increasingly sophisticated technology crimes more effectively and maintain a safe cyberspace for Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) upgraded its Technology Crime Division in 2015 to the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB). There are four sub-divisions under the CSTCB, namely, the Technology Crime Division, the Cyber Security Division, the Cyber Intelligence Division as well as the Forensics and Training Division. In 2023-2024, the establishment of police officers in the CSTCB increased to 395. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective staffing establishments and strength of the four sub-divisions under the CSTCB, with a breakdown by employment modes (i.e. civil servants and various types of contract) and posts; of the respective numbers of staff in the strength with professional backgrounds such as technology and finance;
- (2) of the average wastage of the CSTCB staff in each of the past three years and the respective key positions involved;
- (3) of the respective ratios of vacancies filled by the CSTCB through internal redeployment and open recruitment in the past three years; whether it will consider increasing the ratio of open recruitment to attract more professionals in the community with relevant knowledge such as technology and finance to join the CSTCB;
- (4) whether the HKPF has encountered difficulties in conducting recruitment exercises for the CSTCB; if so, of the details (including the posts involved and the reasons for the recruitment difficulties), and of the specific corresponding measures adopted by the HKPF and the effectiveness of such measures; and
- (5) whether it has studied in depth if the remuneration packages of officers of various ranks in the CSTCB (in particular those posts requiring professional backgrounds such as technology and finance) are attractive and competitive; if it has, of the findings of the study; the specific measures in place (including whether it will consider adjusting the remuneration packages of the relevant staff) to enhance the attractiveness of the posts in the CSTCB?

Reply:

President,

The Security Bureau (SB) and the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) are committed to combatting crimes. To further prevent the occurrence of technology crimes and strengthen the capability in handling cybersecurity incidents, the HKPF established the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) in January 2015. Specifically tasked with computer forensic examinations and prevention of technology crimes, the CSTCB also establishes close liaison with local and overseas law enforcement agencies for combatting cross-border technology crimes and exchanging intelligence. The CSTCB recruits officers through the HKPF's centralised open recruitment and does not conduct open recruitment exercises on its own. Its manpower is mainly provided by internal redeployment within the HKPF or through various measures including extension of service and the Post-retirement Service Contract Scheme. Since its inception, the establishment of police officers in the CSTCB has been increasing to tackle the challenges brought by technology crimes.

In consultation with the HKPF, our consolidated reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1), (3) and (4) The establishment of police officers in the CSTCB has gradually increased from 180 at its inception in 2015 to 395 in the 2023-24 financial year, and is expected to reach 403 by the 2024-25 financial year. A breakdown by position is tabulated below:

Breakdown of the establishment of police officers in the CSTCB by position in the 2024-25 financial year	
Rank	Strength
Gazetted officer (Note 1)	7
Inspectorate officer	58
Rank and File	338
Total	403

Note 1: Gazetted officers are officers of the rank of superintendent or above.

The HKPF is unable to disclose other figures mentioned in the question as it may affect the Police's deployments and operational efficacy.

As mentioned above, the CSTCB recruits officers through the HKPF's centralised open recruitment. It does not conduct open recruitment exercises on its own and its manpower is mainly provided by internal redeployment within the HKPF. When vacancies arise, they will be filled up by internal redeployment or through measures such as extension of service. As for the recruitment of police officers in general, the HKPF has adopted a proactive

recruitment strategy and launched a series of recruitment and publicity campaigns, with a view to attracting high calibre candidates who possess the competences required of a police officer.

The CSTCB has also formulated detailed human resources and strategic plans to strengthen its efforts on staff training and career development. Serving and newly redeployed police officers of the CSTCB receive regular professional training on technology crime investigation, digital forensics and cyber intelligence gathering. In addition, officers of the CSTCB regularly attend the Financial Investigation Course and the Professional Certificate for Commercial Crime Investigation Course provided by the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau and the Commercial Crime Bureau respectively. Therefore, all CSTCB officers possess professional knowledge relating to technology and finance.

To enhance the professional knowledge and operational efficacy of its officers, the CSTCB has set up various advisory panels comprising experts in the relevant fields, with the aim of integrating the professional knowledge and different perspectives of experts and leaders. In particular, the Cybercrime Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) of the CSTCB, comprising 12 panel members who are experts and leaders from various sectors such as the information technology sector, was set up in December 2022. The CPAP assists the Police in formulating strategic directions in order to strengthen the Police's digital policing capabilities in coping with technology crimes.

Furthermore, the CSTCB took the lead in setting up the Cyber Security Action Task Force in March 2023. The Task Force brings together the expertise of renowned local and overseas cyber security companies. Through the exchange of cyber intelligence and the sharing of professional knowledge, it further enhances Hong Kong's capability in coping with cyber threats. The CSTCB has also been reviewing the latest technological developments worldwide. Appropriate equipment will be introduced in a timely manner based on actual needs to further enhance the operational efficacy of its officers.

The HKPF will continue to keep in view its manpower needs and put in place an effective mechanism to plan and assess its overall and future manpower situation. The establishment of police officers will be regularly reviewed to meet the community's demand for the Police's service.

(2) The HKPF does not maintain statistics on the wastage of police officers in individual formations. That said, based on the situation of officers in the CSTCB in the past few years, it is roughly estimated that the attrition rate of the CSTCB officers is broadly similar to that of the HKPF as a whole.

(5) In October 2018, the Chief Executive in Council conducted a grade structure review for the disciplined services (GSR), and decided that it would be conducted once every 10 years in future to ensure that the grade structure and remuneration packages of the disciplined services can effectively attract and retain talents.

Various recommendations were made in the GSR conducted in 2018, covering

matters relating to overall remuneration, starting salaries and conditions of service as well as the new functional requirements of the Police. The recommendations on salary and increment were approved by the Financial Committee of the Legislative Council and came into effect on September 1, 2021. The Government will review the remuneration packages of the HKPF and other disciplined services as appropriate in accordance with the existing mechanism.

Furthermore, the HKPF attaches great importance to the remuneration and welfare of police officers. Depending on their job nature, officers of respective ranks are eligible for various special allowances. For instance, officers performing regular and frequent detective duties (including officers of the CSTCB) will receive detective allowance.

The SB and the HKPF will continue to co-ordinate resources in an effective manner, and further heighten the public's vigilance in order to combat technology crimes and rise to the challenges brought by cyber security and technology crimes.

Red flags hoisted at Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (July 17) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Police conduct anti-illegal gambling operation during UEFA EURO 2024

Police conducted a territory-wide anti-illegal gambling operation codenamed "CROWBEAK" cum "WINDSHIELD" during the UEFA EURO 2024 in June and July. During the operation, Police emphasised on both enforcement and

education in tackling bookmaking and other illegal gambling activities, resulting in the arrest of 735 persons, seizure of over \$692 million betting records and over \$2.5 million in cash and assets.

In this operation, Police conducted a total of 165 raids, resulting in the arrest of 735 persons, including 499 males and 236 females aged between 18 and 74, for the offences of “engaging in bookmaking”, “betting with a bookmaker”, “operating illegal gambling establishments”, “dealing with property known or reasonably believed to representing proceeds of an indictable offence” (commonly known as “money laundering”), etc.

Police seized a total of \$1.1 million of suspected crime proceeds in cash and \$1.4 million worth of valuables, including luxurious watches and vehicles, suspected to represent crime proceeds. Officers also seized 12 computers and 95 mobile phones suspected to be engaging in bookmaking. The total betting records uncovered in the operation amounted to \$692 million.

On the education front, Police conducted a series of preventive education campaigns under the theme “Stay Away from Illegal Betting”, including:

- publicising anti-illegal gambling materials via media and electronic channels, including producing a promotional video (youtu.be/jUoCE2DGH04);
- broadcasting promotional videos and distributing leaflets and posters at entertainment premises and strategic locations; and
- working closely with the community, government departments and other organisations to strengthen the publicity effort of anti-illegal gambling messages through various channels.

Police appeal to the public that in accordance with the Gambling Ordinance (Cap. 148), anyone who bets with a bookmaker commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and nine months’ imprisonment on conviction. Anyone who engages in bookmaking, or promotes or facilitates bookmaking, commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$5 million and seven years’ imprisonment on conviction. A person would still be liable to the offences even if the gambling website is hosted overseas yet he/she engaged in its operation in Hong Kong.

[Alert issued on fake HKPF Website of Online Booking System](#)

The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) alerted members of the public today (July 16) that there was a fraudulent website purportedly to be the Online Booking System developed by the HKPF. The domain name of fraudulent website

was “https://4006804.cc”, which sought to deceive the public by offering three fake services, namely Criminal Wanted Tracing System (CWTS), Submit Funds Inventory (SFI), and Secure Account Acquisition (SAA), in order to obtain from the public their personal data or criminal information, such as names, personal identification document numbers and photos.

The HKPF clarifies that the department has no connection with the fraudulent website and has not offered the three said services. The case is being investigated and followed up, including taking down the fraudulent website, by the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau.

The genuine website of the HKPF should be “https://www.police.gov.hk”.

Members of the public should stay alert and should not visit suspicious websites or disclose any personal information. Anyone who has provided personal information to the website concerned should report the case to the Police.

CFS finds excessive Bacillus cereus in follow-up sample of bottled preserved bean curd

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 16) announced that a follow-up sample of bottled preserved bean curd was found to contain an excessive amount of *Bacillus cereus*. Members of the public should not consume the affected batch of the product. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected batch of the product immediately if they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: (Not available in English)
Place of origin: Hong Kong
Net weight: 255 grams
Best-before date: August 7, 2025
Manufacturer: LIU MA KEE LIMITED

"The CFS announced earlier that a sample of bottled preserved bean curd collected under its routine Food Surveillance Programme from a retail outlet in Sai Ying Pun was found to contain an excessive amount of *Bacillus cereus*. When following up on the incident, the CFS further collected the above-mentioned sample from a retail outlet in Yau Ma Tei on July 9 for testing. The test result showed that the sample contained *Bacillus cereus* at a level of 1 300 000 per gram. According to the Microbiological Guidelines for Food, if ready-to-eat food contains *Bacillus cereus* at a level of more than 100 000

per gram, it is considered unsatisfactory," a spokesman for the CFS said.

The spokesman stated that despite previous instructions to the manufacturer, the result of the follow-up sample has remained unsatisfactory. The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and has instructed the vendor to stop sales and to remove from shelves the affected batch of the product. The manufacturer concerned has initiated a recall of the affected batch of the product according to the CFS's instructions. Members of the public may call the manufacturer's hotline at 2730 2968 during office hours for enquiries about the product recall.

Earlier the CFS has also inspected the food factory concerned, provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the person-in-charge and staff of the food factory, and requested it to review and improve the food production process and carry out thorough cleaning and disinfection. Prosecution will be instituted should there be sufficient evidence.

"Bacillus cereus is commonly found in the environment. Unhygienic conditions in food processing and storage may give rise to its growth. Consuming food contaminated with excessive Bacillus cereus or its heat-stable toxins may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting and diarrhoea," the spokesman said.

â€‹The CFS will alert the trade to the incident, and will continue to follow up and take appropriate action. The investigation is ongoing.