

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1009)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (2) Fire Protection
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 229 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 42):

The Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) (the Ordinance) is to provide better protection from the risk of fire for occupants and users of, and visitors to, certain kinds of composite buildings and domestic buildings. The enforcement authorities of the Ordinance are the Fire Services Department and the Buildings Department. In this regard, would the 2 departments provide the following information:

1. The funding and manpower provided by the Administration to enforce the Ordinance over the past 3 years;
2. The implementation progress of the Ordinance by the Administration and the successful rate of prosecution over the past 3 years;
3. The funding and manpower earmarked by the Administration to implement the Ordinance in the next 3 years?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Han-pan

Reply:

1. In 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14, the Fire Services Department (FSD) and the Buildings Department (BD) each deployed a task force comprising 178 and 116 members respectively to enforce the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance (Cap. 502) and the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572). The objective of the former is to enhance the fire safety standard of prescribed commercial premises and specified commercial buildings constructed in or before March 1987; while the latter enhances the same of composite buildings and domestic buildings constructed at or before that time. In these 3 financial years, the staff costs involved were about \$94 million, \$99 million and \$100 million respectively for the FSD; and about \$45 million, \$47 million and \$49 million respectively for the BD.
2. In the past 3 years, the FSD and the BD inspected a total of 3 450 composite buildings under the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572). The two departments issued a total of 63 194 fire safety directions and instituted a total of 55 prosecutions against building owners/owners' corporations/occupiers who failed to comply with the directions. They have all been convicted by court.
3. In 2014-15, the FSD and the BD will each maintain a task force comprising 178 and 118 members respectively to enforce the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance (Cap. 502) and the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572). The estimated annual staff costs to be involved will be about \$100 million and \$49 million for FSD and BD respectively.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2852)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 233 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 40):

1. It is the target of the Fire Services Department that ambulances should reach the scene within 12 minutes. The percentage of meeting the target response time planned for this year is the same as the target of 92.5% but lower than that of the actual performance of the past 2 years. Please explain.
2. Under the mechanism for ambulances to convey patients to hospital, the patient is sent to the hospital in the respective district instead of the nearest one. Is this one of the causes that leads to the delay in the arrival of ambulances at the scene? Will the Administration review and update the ambulance deployment system so that patients can be conveyed to hospital for proper treatment as early as possible?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Wah-fung, Christopher

Reply:

1. The Fire Services Department (FSD) pledges to answer 92.5% of all emergency ambulance calls within the target response time of 12 minutes. Such performance level also forms the basis for allocation of ambulance resources and deployment strategies of ambulance service. The percentages of the actual performance of the past 2 years are higher than the target of the performance pledge. This may be attributed to the provision of additional ambulance resources to the Department and implementation of a number of improvement measures in the past few years, as well as the positive outcome of the publicity and education activities on the proper use of ambulance service. As the time taken for the ambulances to arrive at the scene can be affected by various unpredictable factors, such as calls to scenes in remote areas or on outlying islands or heavy traffic congestion, we plan to maintain the performance pledge at 92.5% as our target in 2014.
2. We adopt a dynamic approach in deploying ambulances. The computerised mobilising system deploys the ambulance nearest to the scene of incident to attend to every emergency call. The arrangement to convey a patient to the designated hospital in the respective district or the nearest hospital will not delay the arrival of the ambulance at the scene. On the arrangement to convey a patient in critical condition to hospital, the FSD and the Hospital Authority (HA) reached a consensus on conveying patients in critical conditions in cases of cardiac arrest and respiratory arrest to the nearest hospital starting from the second half of 2013. The dedicated working group of the FSD and the HA will monitor and review the effectiveness of the arrangement, and explore the feasibility of extending such arrangement to patients of other types of critical conditions.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0689)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (3) Ambulance Service
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 233 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 40):

Since the Fire Services Department implemented the Rapid Response Vehicle Scheme (the Scheme), how effective has the Scheme been? What was the number of cases, the expenditure and the amount of manpower involved in the Scheme last year? The Department will continue the Scheme in 2014-15 to enhance the delivery of the paramedic ambulance service. What will be the estimated expenditure involved and will additional manpower or resources be required?

Asked by: Hon. CHUNG Kwok-pan

Reply:

The Fire Services Department (FSD) launched Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) Scheme in November 2006. Each RRV is manned by an Ambulance Officer. The main functions of the Scheme are to provide support to frontline ambulance personnel and perform service quality assurance duties to enhance frontline management and operational efficiency. As at the end of February 2014, the RRVs provided support for a total of 11 988 emergency calls, and conducted 8 377 field audits of emergency ambulance cases and 22 947 inspections.

In 2013, the 3 RRVs of the FSD (involving 3 Ambulance Officers) provided support for a total of 1 794 emergency calls, and conducted 1 724 field audits of emergency ambulance cases and 3 250 inspections. The expenditure involved was about \$1.7 million. The FSD considers the Scheme satisfactory and effective and will continue to implement it with the existing manpower in 2014-15. The estimated expenditure for the next year remains at approximately \$1.7 million.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1140)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 233 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 1):

This year, the Fire Services Department will continue to respond to ambulance calls effectively and efficiently through strategic deployment of well-trained personnel, equipment and ambulances. In this regard, would the Administration please inform this Committee of the following:

1. The number of personnel of the Ambulance Stream by rank at present, including the frontline staff and those providing logistic support;
2. The number of ambulance calls over the past 3 years by division;
3. The details of "strategic deployment" referred to by the Administration;
4. The Administration's specific measures to improve the meal break arrangements for frontline ambulance personnel whose meal breaks are frequently interrupted by emergency calls;
5. Regarding point 4 above, whether the Administration will consider the staff side's suggestion of providing a 1-hour on-duty meal break and counting it an hour worked, and what will be the financial commitment involved ;
6. The Administration's specific plan to address the staffing requirement in the Ambulance Stream and the financial commitment to be involved.

Asked by: Hon. IP LAU Suk-ye, Regina

Reply:

1. As at 1 March 2014, the establishment of the Ambulance Stream of the Fire Services Department (FSD) by rank is as follows:

Rank	Establishment
Chief Ambulance Officer	1
Deputy Chief Ambulance Officer	1
Senior Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer	3
Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer	7
Superintendent	14
Senior Ambulance Officer	48
Ambulance Officer	81
Principal Ambulanceman	269
Senior Ambulanceman	681
Ambulanceman	1 721
Total	2 826

2. The number of ambulance calls of the Ambulance Command by Division over the past 3 years is as follows:

	2011	2012	2013*
Hong Kong Division	127 150	131 920	128 575
Kowloon East Division	267 979	282 591	146 459
Kowloon West Division			131 272
New Territories North Division	164 101	172 821	173 315
New Territories South Division	129 929	138 879	139 525
Total	689 159	726 211	719 146

* Kowloon Division has been reorganised into Kowloon East Division and Kowloon West Division with effect from April 2013

3. The FSD has been responding to ambulance calls through strategic deployment of ambulance personnel, equipment and vehicles. It closely monitors the number of ambulance calls and the response time performance of each Division and deploys ambulance resources having regard to the circumstances of individual Divisions. This includes adjusting the number of ambulances deployed to each Division to meet the demand, providing additional ambulance deployment points to increase coverage, review of deployment points for Emergency Medical Assistant Motorcycles and Rapid Response Vehicles, flexible arrangement of working schedule for ambulance personnel, etc. In normal deployment, the Fire Services Communication Centre (FSCC) deploys ambulances to other depots to stand by according to the operation of individual depots for optimal deployment of emergency ambulance resources.

- 4 & 5. As in the cases of many other disciplined services staff, the scheduled meal breaks of frontline ambulancemen may be interrupted because of the need to discharge emergency duties. In view of the fact that the meal breaks of frontline ambulancemen may be interrupted due to the need to discharge emergency duties, the FSD has made flexible meal break arrangements for them, taking into account the emergency nature of ambulance service. According to the existing arrangements, ambulancemen may take turns to have meals during a designated meal break period from 11:30am to 1:30pm. If they are called out during the designated period before they have taken a continuous 30-minute lunch break, they may be compensated with another 30-minute meal break within that period. However, if no other ambulances are available for dispatch at that time, they still have to stop their meals to respond to emergency calls. In the event that ambulancemen are unable to take a continuous 30-minute lunch break during the designated period, they may take a 30-minute compensatory meal break afterwards, during which they will be free from attending ambulance calls.

The Department's statistics showed that the percentage of ambulance crew taking compensatory meal breaks dropped from 19.7% in 2009 to 9.5% in 2013. The Department will continue to communicate with the staff side to further refine the meal break arrangements for ambulancemen.

The FSD has been paying close attention to the meal break arrangements for frontline ambulancemen, and has been discussing the matters with the staff side. The Department arranges meal breaks of reasonable duration for the ambulancemen as far as practicable on the premise that the provision of emergency ambulance service to the public is not affected. In this regard, various improvement measures have been formulated and implemented. For instance, the starting time of the meal break designated for ambulancemen on the advanced shift of the day shift has been advanced to 11:00am, the FSCC accords a lower turn out priority to ambulancemen not having taken their meal so as to facilitate them to return to the ambulance depot for meal, and ambulancemen who are unable to take a meal break during the designated period are eligible for a 30-minute off-call compensatory meal break afterwards, etc. The FSD will continue to maintain dialogue with the staff side and discuss ways to achieve a more effective deployment of manpower and further enhance the meal break arrangements, with a view to providing reasonable meal break arrangements for frontline staff while ensuring the efficient provision of emergency ambulance services to the public.

6. The FSD has been closely monitoring the changes in the demand for emergency ambulance services and the manpower of ambulance personnel. While there was an increase of 11.9% in the demand for ambulance service in 2013 as compared with 2008, the number of staff in the Ambulance Stream increased by approximately 16.3% (i.e. 396) in these 5 years. In 2013, an average of 2 227 ambulance calls were handled by each ambulance, representing a decrease of approximately 10.6% over the 2 490 calls in 2008. In 2014-15, the FSD will create 64 posts in the Ambulance Stream and the estimated annual expenditure involved is approximately \$19 million.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB145****(Question Serial No. 1141)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 233 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 2):

The Administration estimates that there will be 56 300 emergency move-ups of ambulances to provide operational coverage in this year. In this regard, would the Administration please inform this Committee of the following:

1. The total number of ambulance depots at present and their distribution by district;
2. The minimum level of manpower and equipment provided for ambulance depots, and the minimum level of equipment provided for ambulances;
3. Considering that the 37-year-old Chai Wan Ambulance Station, which is located on the ground level of a public housing estate is rather old and small, will the Administration consider the suggestion from the staff associations of the Ambulance Stream to identify a site for provision of a new Chai Wan Ambulance Station? If yes, what will be the estimated financial commitment?
4. Will the Administration also consider the suggestion from the staff associations of the Ambulance Stream to include an ambulance depot in the proposed plan for constructing a fire station for the third airport runway? If yes, what will be the estimated financial commitment?

Asked by: Hon. IP LAU Suk-ye, Regina

Reply:

1. At present, there are altogether 38 ambulance depots and 29 ambulance out-stations (i.e. fire stations with ambulances) in the territory. Their distribution is as follows:

Division	Ambulance depot	Ambulance out-station	Total
Hong Kong	7	10	17
Kowloon East	6	4	10
Kowloon West	8	2	10
New Territories North	8	6	14
New Territories South	9	7	16
The Whole Territory	38	29	67

2. The number of ambulances and staff stationed at each ambulance depot is different according to various factors such as the population and number of ambulance calls received in each division. Each ambulance is normally manned by 3 ambulance personnel and equipped with standard paramedic equipment (including automated external defibrillator, patient monitoring system, scoop stretcher, etc.) and selected drugs for handling emergency conditions.

3. The Fire Services Department (FSD) has been planning to construct a new ambulance depot to replace the existing Chai Wan Ambulance Station, and will follow the established procedures to seek resources from the Administration to implement the plan. An exact figure of the estimated cost is not available at this stage.
4. In accordance with the progress of the airport expansion project under planning and the standards recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organisation, the FSD will consider the needs and arrangements for the provision of various types of emergency service. If such needs are confirmed, we will follow the established procedures to seek resources at an appropriate time.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2219)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (1) Fire Service, (2) Fire Protection and Prevention
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228-229 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 51):

Regarding fire safety talks, will the Administration take the initiative to liaise with housing estates or buildings for organising such talks to enhance the fire safety awareness and knowledge of residents? If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. KWOK, Dennis

Reply:

To enhance the fire safety awareness of the public, the Fire Services Department (FSD) is pleased to accept invitation by residents of housing estates or buildings to organise fire safety talks. The FSD also conveys fire safety knowledge and information to the public through various channels. Details are as follows:

1. To convey fire safety knowledge to management office staff or residents of housing estates or buildings, and discuss with them the organisation of fire safety talks through routine fire safety inspections by personnel of local fire stations and post-incident fire safety publicity activities;
2. To organise open days of fire stations in different districts from time to time to disseminate fire safety messages to the public;
3. To hold regular meetings with District Fire Safety Committees, to discuss with the District Offices and local stakeholders the organisation of different types of fire safety promotion activities, and to disseminate proper fire safety information to residents through the local community;
4. To deploy the Fire Safety Education Bus and Mobile Publicity Unit to visit housing estates to promote fire safety;
5. To take the initiative to liaise with residents of target old buildings for encouraging and inviting them to participate in the courses under the Building Fire Safety Envoy Scheme and the Fire Safety Ambassador Scheme organised by FSD, so that they can assist in promoting fire safety and organising fire prevention activities (such as fire drills) for other residents; and
6. To produce television announcements of public interests and radio programmes to disseminate fire safety messages to the public.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2220)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 232 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 58):

Regarding the indicators for composite buildings, the “no. of fire safety directions issued” has been significantly higher than the “no. of fire safety directions complied with/discharged”. Would the Administration inform this Committee of the following:

1. The reason for such difference;
2. What measures will the Administration take to narrow the difference?

Asked by: Hon. KWOK, Dennis

Reply:

1. The Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) (the Ordinance), which commenced operation in July 2007, aims to enhance fire safety of old composite and domestic buildings. The Fire Services Department (FSD) issues fire safety directions (the FS Directions) to the owners and/or occupiers of target buildings where necessary after inspection of these buildings. The FSD normally gives the owners a year to comply with the FS Directions. The FSD handles such cases in a flexible and pragmatic manner on the premise that the basic level of fire safety for these buildings is not compromised. If the owners need more time to prepare for and carry out the improvement works for reasons such as the establishment of an owners' corporation (OC), or more time is required for discussing the works or raising funds, etc., the FSD may duly consider their applications for extending the compliance period having regard to the justifications they provided and/or the scale of the improvement works involved. As a result, the number of FS Directions issued is higher than those complied with/discharged.
2. The FSD has taken appropriate measures to raise the compliance rate of FS Directions. The FSD understands that some property owners may not understand the content of the FS Directions and our fire services personnel are ready to meet with them or the qualified persons they engage to explain to them the requirements set out in the FS Directions and assist them in solving problems that may be encountered in carrying out the improvement works. The FSD also understands that owners of certain buildings may fail to fully comply with the requirements of the FS Directions due to the structural or spatial constraints of these buildings. In view of this, the FSD may allow reasonable flexibility in enforcing certain requirements and considers accepting alternatives proposed by property owners having regard to circumstances of individual cases and information provided by authorized persons in relation to compliance with FS Directions. The FSD also refers cases of buildings without OCs to the respective District Offices (DOs) as soon as practicable, so that the DOs may assist owners in establishing OCs to achieve better co-ordination of the improvement works. The Buildings Department, the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Urban Renewal Authority have been running financial assistance schemes to help owners of private buildings maintain and repair their buildings. Fire safety improvement works pertaining to the Ordinance have been incorporated into the list of works eligible for subsidies or loans under these schemes.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1135)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses
Programme: (3) Ambulance Service
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 237 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 80):

Regarding the manpower deployment of ambulancemen, would the Administration inform this Committee of the following:

1. The numbers of daily and weekly working hours of the ambulancemen at present by post and division;
2. At present, ambulancemen are unable to take the meal breaks after 1:25pm when they are required to attend to calls during their shift and they can only have 30 minutes for lunch. Please provide the percentage of the average number of working days that an ambulanceman has to have lunch in this manner over the total number of their working days in 2013-2014;
3. The additional manpower required for each fire station and the expenditure to be involved if the compensatory meal break for ambulanceman is extended to an hour?

Asked by: Hon. KWOK Wai-keung

Reply:

1. At present, the conditioned hours of work of ambulancemen (including Principal Ambulancemen, Senior Ambulancemen and Ambulancemen) are 48 hours per week. In normal circumstances, they work a 12-hour shift on a cycle of "two day shifts, one night shift and two days off".
- 2 & 3. As in the cases of many other disciplined services staff, the scheduled meal breaks of frontline ambulancemen may be interrupted because of the need to discharge emergency duties. In view of the fact that the meal breaks of frontline ambulancemen may be interrupted due to the need to discharge emergency duties, the Fire Services Department (FSD) has made flexible meal break arrangements for them, taking into account the emergency nature of ambulance service. According to the existing arrangements, ambulancemen may take turns to have meals during a designated meal break period from 11:30am to 1:30pm. If they are called out during the designated period before they have taken a continuous 30-minute lunch break, they may be compensated with another 30-minute meal break within that period. However, if no other ambulances are available for dispatch at that time, they still have to stop their meals to respond to emergency calls. In the event that ambulancemen are unable to take a continuous 30-minute lunch break during the designated period, they may take a 30-minute compensatory meal break afterwards, during which they will be free from attending ambulance calls.

The Department's statistics showed that the percentage of ambulance crew taking compensatory meal breaks dropped from 19.7% in 2009 to 9.5% in 2013. The Department will continue to communicate with the staff side to further refine the meal break arrangements for ambulancemen.

The FSD has been paying close attention to the meal break arrangements for frontline ambulancemen, and has been discussing the matters with the staff side. The Department arranges meal breaks of reasonable duration for the ambulancemen as far as practicable on the premise that the provision of emergency ambulance service to the public is not affected. In this regard, various improvement measures have been formulated and implemented. For instance, the starting time of the meal break designated for ambulancemen on the advanced shift of the day shift has been advanced to 11:00am, the Fire Services Communication Centre accords a lower turn out priority to ambulancemen not having taken their meal so as to facilitate them to return to the ambulance depot for meal, and ambulancemen who are unable to take a meal break during the designated period are eligible for a 30-minute off-call compensatory meal break afterwards, etc. The FSD will continue to maintain dialogue with the staff side and discuss ways to achieve a more effective deployment of manpower and further enhance the meal break arrangements, with a view to providing reasonable meal break arrangements for frontline staff while ensuring the efficient provision of emergency ambulance services to the public.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1136)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 237 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 76):

Regarding the deployment of frontline fire personnel in 2013-14, would the Administration inform this Committee of the following:

1. The hours of work per week of fire personnel at present to be set out by post and stream;
2. Following the reduction of hours of work of the concerned fire personnel, what is the average number of additional staff required for each fire station and what is the additional recurrent expenditure thus required?

Asked by: Hon. KWOK Wai-keung

Reply:

1. The hours of work per week of frontline fire personnel of the Fire Services Department (FSD) at present are as follows:

Stream	Rank (frontline fire personnel)	Hours of work
Operational/Marine	Senior Station Officer/Station Officer Principal Fireman Senior Fireman Fireman	54 conditioned hours of work per week (The proposal for reducing the hours of work to 51 hours per week is currently being put on trial)
Mobilizing and Communications	Senior Station Officer/Station Officer (Control) Principal Fireman (Control) Senior Fireman (Control)	48 conditioned hours of work per week (Remarks: The conditioned hours of work for members of the Mobilizing and Communication Group, who are deployed to the operational Commands, are 54 hours per week. The proposal for reducing the hours of work of these members to 51 hours per week is currently on trial)

2. The FSD's proposal to reduce the hours of work of the concerned fire personnel was formulated under the three prerequisites of cost-neutrality, no additional manpower, and maintaining the same level of service to the public according to the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service. The concerned working hour reduction proposal currently on trial by FSD requires neither additional manpower nor additional recurrent expenditure.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2342)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (3) Ambulance Service
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 233 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 24):

How many ambulance calls received in 2013 were actually not emergency cases? What was the expenditure involved in such calls? Will the Department conduct any review in respect of the misuse of ambulance service so as to ensure effective use of public resources?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Kin-fung, Jeffrey

Reply:

In 2013, the Fire Services Department (FSD) conducted an analysis of the emergency ambulance calls received to understand the use of the emergency ambulance service by the public. Of the about 10 000 randomly selected cases, approximately 2.7% reflected no obvious need for the service. This revealed a downward trend in the percentage of such cases as against 10.3% and 4.2% recorded in similar analyses in 2009 and 2011 respectively. These figures showed that the Department's efforts in educating the public on the proper use of ambulance service in the past few years had yielded good results. The revised estimated expenditure on ambulance service for 2013-14 is about \$1.34 billion, but there is no separate estimate for the expenditure incurred by the aforesaid cases. To ensure effective use of public resources, the FSD will continue to closely monitor the need for and the use of the emergency ambulance service, and step up its efforts to convey the message of proper use of ambulance service to the public through various channels.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB151****(Question Serial No. 2347)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 234 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 29):

Please provide the number of civil servants to be recruited in 2014-15 by grade and rank? How does it compare with the additional posts for the current year? What is the expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Kin-fung, Jeffrey

Reply:

The Fire Services Department will have a net increase of 137 posts in 2014-15. The annual expenditure involved is estimated to be about \$51 million. The net increase of posts is detailed as follows:

Grade	Rank	Number
Fire stream	Divisional Officer	1
	Assistant Divisional Officer	3
	Senior Station Officer/Station Officer	22
	Senior Fireman	4
	Fireman	18
Ambulance stream	Senior Ambulance Officer	1
	Ambulance Officer	2
	Principal Ambulanceman	5
	Senior Ambulanceman	15
	Ambulanceman	41
Civilian, technical and other grades	Senior Telecommunications Engineer	1
	Building Services Inspector	1
	Assistant Inspector (Telecommunications)	1
	Assistant Building Services Inspector	1
	Assistant Clerical Officer	20
	Clerical Assistant	1
Total		137

The net increase of posts in 2014-15 is 28 less than the 165 posts in 2013-14.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**(Question Serial No. 1821)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (661) Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 237 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 11):

The Fire Services Department's provision of \$30.62 million under "Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)" represents an increase of \$16.25 million (113.1%) over the revised estimate for 2013-14. The Department explains that this is due to increased cash flow requirement for fire appliances and equipment. Please tabulate the fire appliances and equipment to be procured, the expenditure involved and their suppliers. Why is there a significant increase in the cash flow which is more than double the figure of last year? How many fire appliances and equipment were replaced over the past year due to depreciation?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Tai-fai

Reply:

The Fire Services Department (FSD) will submit funding proposal for acquiring/replacing minor plant, vehicles and equipment according to the actual operational needs, and the service life, wear and tear and depreciation of each type of plant, vehicles and equipment. Therefore, the provision does not necessarily increase or decrease annually and there are no criteria for determining its rate of increase or decrease. Taking into account the wear and tear and depreciation of minor plant and equipment, the items replaced by the FSD in 2013-14 mainly included the compartment fire behaviour training facility and the public address and call out system.

The FSD has proposed a provision of \$30.621 million (block vote) for replacing or acquiring additional minor plant, vehicles and equipment in 2014-15. Details are as follows:

Minor plant, vehicles and equipment		Quantity	Estimated expenditure in 2014-15 (\$)
(I) Items to be acquired*			
1	Rescue Jet Bike	6 Nos.	3,441,000
2	Logistic Support Appliance	1 No.	290,000
3	Handheld thermal device	3 Nos.	975,000
4	Vehicle for High Angle Rescue Team	1 No.	112,000
5	Vehicle for Incident and Fire Safety Support Unit	2 Nos.	1,112,000
Sub-total:			5,930,000

(II) Replacement items*			
1	Logistic Support Appliance	1 No.	290,000
2	Emergency Medical Assistant Motorcycle	24 Nos.	3,318,000
3	Hook Lift Truck	1 No.	472,000
4	Workshop Van	5 Nos.	1,271,000
5	Radar system on fireboat	4 Sets	1,008,000
6	Public address/call out system	5 Sets	2,750,000
7	Vehicle brake tester	3 Nos.	1,980,000
8	Major components of air conditioning system in Fire Services premises	11 Sets	4,130,000
9	Emergency generator	6 Nos.	1,312,000
10	Potable water/brine pump in Fire Services premises	12 Nos.	1,900,000
11	Maintenance of decompression chamber on Fireboat Elite	1 No.	1,086,000
Sub-total:			19,517,000
(III) Partial payment for items approved in previous financial years:			5,174,000
Total:			30,621,000

*The estimated expenditure of the items is derived from the price quotation and payment arrangement proposed by the suppliers or other government departments. The actual suppliers will be determined after the award of contracts.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB153****(Question Serial No. 1962)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (-) Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 85):

Please tabulate the number, duration, destination and purpose of duty visits outside Hong Kong made by the Director over the past 3 years, as well as the post titles and the number of accompanying staff of each visit and details of the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon. LAU Wai-hing, Emily

Reply:

Details of duty visits outside Hong Kong made by the Director over the past 3 years are as follows:

Date of duty visit (No. of visit)	Duration (Days)	Destination	Purpose of duty visit	No. of accompanying staff*	Expenditure on duty visits (Including the Director and accompanying staff)(Rounded up to the nearest thousand)**
2011-12 (9 visits)	35	Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Zhejiang, Shenzhen, Macau, United States (US), Australia, United Arab Emirates	Official visit / Conference	1-10	\$484,000
2012-13 (3 visits)	20	US, Australia, Japan	Conference	1-3	\$239,000
2013-14 (3 visits)	11	Beijing, Chongqing, Macau	Official visit / Conference	6-11	\$240,000

* Accompanying staff at different ranks including Assistant Directors, Deputy Chief Fire Officers, Senior Assistant Chief Ambulance Officers, Senior Divisional Officers, Assistant Chief Ambulance Officers, Divisional Officers, Ambulance Superintendents, Assistant Divisional Officers, Senior Ambulance Officers, Senior Station Officers, Station Officers, Principal Firemen, Senior Ambulancemen and Firemen.

** Including expenses for air tickets and the subsistence allowance payable to visiting officers under the Civil Service Regulations.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1968)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses
Programme: (-) Not Specified
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 91):

Please list:

1. The amount of non-accountable entertainment allowance provided for the Director in the past 3 years.
2. The number of occasions where the Director presented gifts bought with public money to officials of other governments in the past 3 years and the actual amount spent on each occasion, in detail and in tabular form.
3. The guests invited to meals hosted by the Director over the past 3 years and their post titles; dates and venues of the meals; the number of accompanying departmental staff; and details of the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon. LAU Wai-hing, Emily

Reply:

1. "Non-accountable entertainment allowance" is not provided in the Department.
2. The Government of the current term upholds the principles of honesty and simplicity. It generally does not accept or exchange souvenirs or gifts in functions and activities. If there is a need to go through the protocol for exchanging souvenirs or gifts, appropriate souvenirs or gifts would be procured having regard to the capacity of the guests and the occasions to ensure proper use of public funds. The procurement of supplies (including gifts or souvenirs) must be in compliance with the Stores and Procurement Regulations of the Government. This Department does not maintain a separate account in respect of the expenses for the procurement of souvenirs. As such, relevant statistics are not available.
3. According to the Civil Service Regulations, Heads of Department and officers authorised by their Heads of Departments may have their expenditure on entertainment charged to public funds. Such expenditure should be directly related to the discharge of an officer's duties or a necessary part of making or maintaining contacts in his official capacity. The status of the guests and the standard of entertainment appropriate to the occasion must be taken into account when deciding the place and scale of entertainment.

In addition, according to the Government's internal guidelines, the expenses for entertaining guests should not exceed \$450 per person for lunch and \$600 per person for dinner. In discharging their duties, civil servants must strictly adhere to the relevant expenditure guidelines and approval mechanism if entertainments such as meals are involved. Where the circumstances require that the expenses exceed the expenditure guidelines, full justifications must be given and approval must be

sought. This set of procedures is applicable to all Government departments, including the disciplined services.

This Department does not maintain a separate account in respect of the expenses for official entertainment of individual officers. The total expenses for local entertainment of the Fire Services Department in the past three years are as follows:

Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14 (As at February 2014)
Departmental expenses for local entertainment (rounded up to the nearest thousand)	\$247,000	\$354,000	\$180,000

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB155****(Question Serial No. 2690)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 234 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 201):

There will be an increase of 65 posts for the ambulance service in 2014-15. In this regard, would the Government inform this Committee of the establishment and strength of each rank in the ambulance service of the Fire Services Department in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15?

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Ka-lau

Reply:

The establishment and strength of each rank under the Programme of Ambulance Service of the Fire Services Department in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 (estimate) are as follows:

Rank	2012-13 (As at 31 March 2013)		2013-14 (As at 1 March 2014)		2014-15#
	Establishment	Strength*	Establishment	Strength*	Establishment
Chief Ambulance Officer	1	1	1	1	1
Deputy Chief Ambulance Officer	1	1	1	1	1
Senior Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer	3	3	3	4	3
Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer	6	6	7	8	7
Superintendent	13	11	12	12	12
Senior Ambulance Officer	47	46	47	47	48
Ambulance Officer	81	84	81	85	83
Principal Ambulanceman	268	254	269	264	274
Senior Ambulanceman	659	683	676	698	691
Ambulanceman	1 685	1 647	1 721	1 635	1 762
Other grades [^]	69	62	69	62	70
Total	2 833	2 798	2 887	2 817	2 952

[^] Other grades mainly include the Clerical Officer grade and the Workman II grade

* Including staff members on pre-retirement leave

The estimated strength of various ranks for 2014-15 is not available as the number of staff members varies from time to time

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**(Question Serial No. 2381)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 229 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 24):

To prevent fire hazards, the Government implemented the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) (the Ordinance) in 2007 to ensure that the specified composite and residential buildings are up to the fire safety standard. While the intention of the Ordinance deserves support, it fails to give proper regard to the difficulties to be encountered by owners or the residents' organisations of old buildings in carrying out improvement works. In this regard, would the Administration inform this Committee of the following:

1. The resources provided by the Administration to enforce the Ordinance over the past 3 years; please provide the breakdown of the expenditure involved;
2. At present, there are many "three nil" buildings (i.e. the old blocks without owners' corporations (OCs), residents' organisations or property management companies). As it takes time to establish an OC, would the Administration consider implementing a new measure to help "three nil" buildings upgrade their fire service equipment at an earlier time by, for example, coordinating the improvement works for the owners or occupants of these buildings and recovering the costs incurred afterwards. If yes, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla

Reply:

1. In 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14, the Fire Services Department (FSD) and the Buildings Department (BD) each deployed a task force comprising 178 and 116 members respectively to enforce the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance (Cap. 502) and the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572). The objective of the former is to enhance the fire safety standard of prescribed commercial premises and specified commercial buildings constructed in or before March 1987; while the latter enhances the same of composite buildings and domestic buildings constructed at or before that time. In these 3 financial years, the staff costs involved were about \$94 million, \$99 million and \$100 million respectively for the FSD; and about \$45 million, \$47 million and \$49 million respectively for the BD.
2. The improvement works for fire service installations (FSIs) under the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (the Ordinance) (Cap. 572) is to provide better protection from the risk of fire for occupants and users of, and visitors to, the target buildings. This does not mean there is any imminent and obvious fire hazard in those buildings. The FSD and the BD are prepared to meet with owners or the authorised persons engaged to explain the requirements of the Ordinance and assist them in solving potential problems associated with the works. The Home Affairs Department (HAD) will also continue to implement the helping measures targeting at "three-nil buildings". For example, the HAD launched the Building Management Professional Advisory Service Scheme,

under which professional property management companies were commissioned to provide free professional advisory services on building management and safety to owners of “three-nil” buildings. Those services included household visits as well as assistance in liaising with and organising owners for the setting up of owners’ corporations. The BD, the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Urban Renewal Authority have been running financial assistance schemes to assist owners of private buildings to maintain and repair their buildings, including the Building Safety Loan Scheme, the Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme and the Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners. Fire safety improvement works pertaining to the Ordinance have been incorporated into the list of works eligible for subsidies or loans under these schemes. At present, the Ordinance does not empower the enforcement authorities to conduct fire safety improvement works for target buildings and to recover the costs incurred from the relevant parties afterwards. Apart from that, owners/occupants of the buildings need to discuss and reach a consensus about the feasible options and work arrangements of the fire safety improvement works (such as locations of the installations) before carrying out the works. It is not appropriate for the enforcement authorities to make such decisions for them.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3093)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (603) Plant, vehicles and equipment
Programme: (-) Not Specified
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 238-239 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 118):

The normal service lifespan of steel-hulled vessels in the Government fleet is about 20 years. According to the information on the Fire Services Department website, the existing Fireboat No. 4 and Fireboat No. 8 were both built in 2008. Regarding the provision for the replacement of the 2 fireboats under Item 834 and 878, please advise:

1. The originally estimated service lifespan of these 2 fireboats;
2. The reasons for replacing these 2 boats in less than 7 years;
3. How will these 2 boats be disposed of after decommissioning;
4. What are the differences in the functional requirements between the 2 new fireboats and the existing ones?

Asked by: Hon. MA Fung-kwok

Reply:

Both the existing Fireboat No. 4 (Item 834 under Subhead 603) and Fireboat No. 8 (Item 878 under Subhead 603) of the Fire Services Department were replacement vessels and commissioned in 2008. The former is a steel-hulled vessel and the latter is an aluminum one, with a designed life of about 20 years and 15 years respectively. Since these two vessels have not reached the end of their designed lives and are still in good working conditions, the Department has no plan to replace them at the moment. As regards the estimates for these items, most of the expenses for the procurement of Fireboat No. 4 and Fireboat No. 8 have been met in or before 2009-10. The revised estimated expenditures (i.e. \$183,000 and \$95,000 respectively) in 2013-14 are for the procurement of equipment for these fireboats to suit their operational needs.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0546)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (-) Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 14):

The Fire Services Department estimates that there will be an increase of 137 non-directorate posts in 2014-15. In this regard, would the Administration please provide the following information:

1. The number of posts to be deleted and created by the Department by Programme, rank and function;
2. The establishment and strength in 2013-14 and 2014-15 (estimated figures) under each Programme by rank.

Asked by: Hon. POON Siu-ping

Reply:

1. The Fire Services Department will have a net increase of 137 non-directorate posts in 2014-15. Details are as follows:

Programme	Rank	Number	Function
Programme (1) Fire Service	Senior Station Officer/ Station Officer	4	To man an additional fire appliance at Pat Heung Fire Station to cope with the increasing service demand
	Senior Fireman	4	
	Fireman	18	
	Senior Station Officer/ Station Officer	8	To receive training starting from 2014-15 for deployment to the new fire station at Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Boundary Crossing Facilities in the second half of 2016
	Senior Telecommunications Engineer	1	To strengthen technical support of information technology management of the Department
	Assistant Inspector (Telecommunications)	1	
	Assistant Clerical Officer	18	
Programme (2) Fire Protection and Prevention	Divisional Officer	1	To handle the fire safety certification work arising from expected new housing projects to tie in with the Government's policy to speed up housing supply
	Assistant Divisional Officer	3	
	Senior Station Officer/ Station Officer	10	
	Building Services Inspector	1	
	Assistant Building Services Inspector	1	
	Assistant Clerical Officer	1	
	Clerical Assistant	1	

Programme (3) Ambulance Service	Senior Ambulanceman Ambulanceman	20 41	To operate additional ambulance shifts to cope with the increasing demand for emergency ambulance service To be deployed to the ambulance depot at Choi Shun Street, Sheung Shui scheduled for commission in March 2015
	Senior Ambulance Officer Ambulance Officer	1 2	
	Principal Ambulanceman Senior Ambulanceman	5 (5)	
	Assistant Clerical Officer	1	
Total:		137	

2. The establishment and strength of various grades in the FSD in 2013-14 are set out as follows:

Grade	Programme 1		Programme 2		Programme 3		Total	
	Establishment	Strength*	Establishment	Strength*	Establishment	Strength*	Establishment	Strength*
Fire Stream	6 290	6 103	315	337	0	0	6 605	6 440
Ambulance Stream	8	22	0	2	2 818	2 755	2 826	2 779
Civilian, technical and other grades	436	412	191	178	69	62	696	652
Total:	6 734	6 537	506	517	2 887	2 817	10 127	9 871

* Strength as at 1 March 2014 (including staff members on pre-retirement leave)

The estimated establishment of various grades in the FSD in 2014-15 is set out as follows:

Grade	Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3	Total
Fire Stream	6 323	329	0	6 652
Ambulance Stream	8	0	2 882	2 890
Civilian, technical and other grades	457	195	70	722
Total:	6 788	524	2 952	10 264

The estimated strength of various grades for 2014-15 is not available as the number of staff members varies from time to time.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1508)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 230 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 49):

In view of the fire incidents in unlicensed guesthouses with inadequate fire protection measures, will the Fire Services Department step up the inspection of buildings this year to ensure that their fire safety measures meet the requirements? Please provide details of the Department's arrangements in this regard.

Asked by: Hon. TO Kun-sun, James

Reply:

The licensing of guesthouse and its related enforcement work are under the purview of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) of the Home Affairs Department. The OLA has formulated a set of licensing conditions, including fire safety requirements, for such premises. If OLA personnel identify any fire service installations and equipment (FSIs) in a guesthouse that are defective or not inspected annually during an inspection, relevant actions will be taken according to the licensing conditions and those cases will be referred to the Fire Services Department (FSD) for follow-up actions in respect of such FSIs. Generally, FSD personnel conduct routine inspection of various types of buildings and special inspection programmes for the fire safety condition of certain types of buildings when necessary. In view of the recent public concern over the fire safety of old buildings, the FSD has also launched a number of specific inspection programmes for such buildings. If FSD personnel identify any breach of the Fire Services Ordinance (Cap. 95) during a building inspection, e.g. obstruction or locking-up of means of escape, wedged-open smoke stop doors, or FSIs that are defective or not inspected annually, etc., appropriate enforcement actions will be taken. Cases of other possible breaches such as suspected unlicensed guesthouses and suspected illegal structures will also be referred to relevant authorities for follow-up actions.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2305)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 50):

What are the details of the procurement of fire services equipment by the Department in 2013-14? Has the Department reserved additional resources to upgrade the communications equipment used at scene of incident? What is the estimated expenditure?

Asked by: Hon. TO Kun-sun, James

Reply:

The revised estimated expenditure on the procurement of various types of fire appliances and major equipment by the Fire Services Department (FSD) was approximately \$98 million in 2013-14, which was mainly for the replacement of fire appliances and equipment (such as turntable ladder and rescue cushion) and the procurement of new vehicles and equipment (such as firefighting training unit and mobile decontamination equipment).

As regards the communications equipment at scene of incident, the FSD reserved \$14.5 million in 2013-14 to enhance the radio coverage of the digital radio communication system and the reliability of the related communications equipment.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2307)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (3) Ambulance Service
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 238 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 66):

What is the expenditure on the establishment and facilities of the Ambulance Stream? Is there any provision earmarked for improving its establishment and facilities? If yes, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon. TO Kun-sun, James

Reply:

In 2013-14, there were 2 887 established posts, 38 ambulance depots, 29 out-stations (i.e. fire stations with ambulances), 347 ambulances and 36 Emergency Medical Assistant Motorcycles under the ambulance service of the Fire Services Department. The estimated recurrent expenditure in 2014-15 is \$1.4391 billion, representing a growth of 7.6% over the revised estimate of \$1.3377 billion in 2013-14. The increase in expenditure is mainly due to the addition of an ambulance depot at Choi Shun Street, Sheung Shui and the creation of 65 posts in total under the establishment of the Ambulance Stream, including 1 Senior Ambulance Officer, 2 Ambulance Officers, 20 Senior Ambulancemen, 41 Ambulancemen and 1 Assistant Clerical Officer.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB162

(Question Serial No. 0622)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (3) Ambulance Service
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 233 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 44):

Regarding the implementation of complementary immigration measures on non-local pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong, would the Administration inform this Committee of the number of non-local pregnant women using emergency ambulance service at boundary control points in 2013-14?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-kin

Reply:

From 1 April 2013 to 28 February 2014, the Fire Services Department provided emergency ambulance service to a total of 13 non-local pregnant women at boundary control points who called for ambulances due to delivery-related conditions.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2922)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses
Programme: (3) Ambulance Service
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 233 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 96):

Ambulancemen have held a rally to protest over manpower shortage and excessive workload. What measures will the Fire Services Department take to review and address the issues in relation to the wage and the hours of work of ambulancemen in the coming year?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yuk-man

Reply:

The FSD has been closely monitoring the changes in the demand for emergency ambulance service and the manpower of ambulance personnel. While there was an increase of 11.9% in the demand for ambulance service in 2013 as compared with 2008, the number of staff in the Ambulance Stream increased by approximately 16.3% (i.e. 396) in these 5 years. In 2013, an average of 2 227 ambulance calls were handled by each ambulance, representing a decrease of approximately 10.6% over the 2 490 calls in 2008. In 2014-15, the FSD will create 64 posts in the Ambulance Stream and the estimated annual expenditure involved is approximately \$19 million.

As regards the issue of the meal break arrangements raised by the Ambulancemen's Union, the FSD has been paying close attention to such arrangements and has been discussing the matters with the staff side. The Department arranges meal breaks of reasonable duration for the ambulancemen as far as practicable on the premise that the provision of emergency ambulance service to the public is not affected. In this regard, various improvement measures have been formulated and implemented. For instance, the starting time of the meal break designated for ambulancemen on the advanced shift of the day shift has been advanced to 11:00am, the Fire Services Communication Centre accords a lower turn out priority to ambulancemen not having taken their meal so as to facilitate them to return to the ambulance depot for meal, and ambulancemen who are unable to take a meal break during the designated period are eligible for a 30-minute off-call compensatory meal break afterwards, etc. The FSD will continue to maintain dialogue with the staff side and discuss ways to achieve a more effective deployment of manpower and further enhance the meal break arrangements, with a view to providing reasonable meal break arrangements for frontline staff while ensuring the efficient provision of emergency ambulance service to the public.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**(Question Serial No. 1521)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 229 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 1):

In the first stage of the inspection work under the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance, the Government has planned to inspect 1 150 composite buildings in 2014. What are the manpower and expenditure involved in such work? Please describe the distribution of those 1 150 buildings and the number of buildings which have not yet been inspected in the 18 District Council districts.

Asked by: Hon. WU Chi-wai

Reply:

In 2014-15, the Fire Services Department (FSD) and the Buildings Department (BD) will each deploy a task force comprising 178 and 118 members respectively to enforce the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance (Cap. 502) and the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572). The estimated staff costs involved for the FSD will be about \$100 million and about \$49 million for the BD.

At present, the FSD and the BD are conducting joint inspections of the target composite buildings under the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) and the list of target buildings is compiled by the BD on a monthly basis. Therefore, at present, the FSD is unable to provide the distribution of composite buildings scheduled for inspection in 2014 in various districts.

Based on information of the BD, the approximate total number of composite buildings which have not yet been inspected in various District Council districts as at the end of 2013 is as follows:

District Council districts	Number of composite buildings which have not yet been inspected
Central and Western	350
Wan Chai	240
Eastern	310
Southern	80
Yau Tsim Mong	420
Sham Shui Po	270
Kowloon City	260
Wong Tai Sin	40
Kuwn Tong	60
Tsuen Wan	80
Tuen Mun	90
Yuen Long	110

North	30
Tai Po	70
Sai Kung	10
Sha Tin	60
Islands	10
Kwai Tsing	60
Total	2 550

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 4905)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (1) Fire Service
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 229 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 163):

Regarding the fire service of the Fire Services Department, please provide information on the following:

1. The reasons for the increase in the estimated number of prosecutions to be instituted in 2014 as compared to the figures in 2012 and 2013;
2. The reasons for the decrease in the estimated number of lectures and advisory services to be given to hospitals/clinics in 2014 as compared to the figure in 2012;
3. The details of the construction of the new Fire Services Training School, the procurement of a fireboat and the commissioning of the Asset Management and Maintenance System, the expenditure and manpower involved, and their expected lifespan and effectiveness.

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth

Reply:

1. The estimated number of prosecutions to be instituted in 2014 was based on the actual figure in 2013. In 2014, the Fire Services Department (FSD) will continue to conduct proactive and follow-up inspections of various types of old buildings and take relevant enforcement actions to eliminate fire hazards. The estimated number of prosecutions in 2014 is therefore slightly higher than the figure in 2013.
2. Since the provision of lectures and advisory services to hospitals/clinics is demand-led, it is unable to give an exact estimated frequency of the services to be provided. In preparing the estimates for the indicator, the FSD takes into account the previous actual figures and makes adjustment accordingly. According to our records, the actual number of such services in 2011, 2012 and 2013 were 870, 956 and 856 respectively. It is believed that the higher figure recorded in 2012 was due to a fire at a hospital in the New Territories in August that year which aroused stakeholders' concerns about fire safety at hospitals and therefore pushed up the demand for the services in the few months afterwards.
3. The details of the construction of the new Fire Services Training School (FSTS), the procurement of a fireboat and the commissioning of the Asset Management and Maintenance System are as follows:

(i) Construction of the new FSTS

The FSD was approved a funding of \$3.56 billion by the Legislative Council (Legco) in 2012 to relocate the FSTS in Pat Heung, New Territories. The new school is located at Pak Shing Kok, Area 78, Tseung Kwan O, covering an area of 158 000 square metres. The

construction work commenced in August 2012.

Apart from the various thematic simulation training facilities for firefighting and rescue training, the new FSTS will also provide driving training and basic ambulance training so as to provide fire and ambulance personnel with more opportunities to receive training together, thereby enhancing their cooperation and mutual support. In addition, the new FSTS will have a Fire Services Education Centre which renders interactive and multi-media facilities as well as different experiential areas to promote and disseminate knowledge of fire protection, fire evacuation and first aid. The FSD will deploy manpower or seek resources as appropriate to meet the operational needs of the new FSTS.

(ii) Procurement of fireboat

The FSD was approved a funding of \$85 million by the Legco in 2012 to procure a new fireboat to replace the existing Fireboat No. 7. The new fireboat will be equipped with enhanced navigational and operational features as well as marine firefighting and rescue equipment to meet the demand for marine firefighting and rescue services nowadays. Its expected lifespan is 20 years and the relevant procurement work is in progress. This item will not require any additional manpower.

(iii) Commissioning of the Asset Management and Maintenance System

The FSD was approved a funding of \$49.83 million by the Legco in 2012 to develop the “Asset Management and Maintenance System” to enhance the effectiveness of procurement and management of various departmental assets. The expected lifespan of the system is 10 years. The system is expected to commence operation in 2015. This item will not require any additional manpower.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 4906)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (3) Ambulance Service
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 233 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 164):

Regarding the ambulance service of the Fire Services Department, please provide information on the following:

1. For "emergency calls answered within the target response time of 12 minutes", the planned percentage in 2014 is 92.5%, which is lower than the actual figures in 2012 and 2013. What are the reasons?
2. What are the expenditure and manpower involved in the computer system that the Department has planned to acquire, and what is the expected performance of the system?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth

Reply:

1. The Fire Services Department (FSD) pledges to answer 92.5% of all emergency ambulance calls within the target response time of 12 minutes. Such performance level also forms the basis for allocation of ambulance resources and deployment strategies of ambulance service. The percentages of the actual performance of the past 2 years are higher than the target of the performance pledge. This may be attributed to the provision of additional ambulance resources to the Department and implementation of a number of improvement measures in the past few years, as well as the positive outcome of the publicity and education activities on the proper use of ambulance service. As the time taken for the ambulances to arrive at the scene can be affected by various unpredictable factors, such as calls to scenes in remote areas or on outlying islands or heavy traffic congestion, we plan to maintain the performance pledge at 92.5% as our target in 2014.
2. The FSD is planning to acquire a computer system installed with an internationally-accredited questioning protocol software, by which we may identify more complicated and a wider range of conditions (such as severe injuries and cardiac arrest) and provide more detailed and appropriate post-dispatch advice to callers, thereby improving patients' conditions and survival rate before arrival of ambulance crew. The FSD intends to consult the Panel on Security on the procurement plan later this year.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**(Question Serial No. 6039)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 338):

What is the respective number of the refresher and tactical training provided by the Fire Services Department to all the service staff in the past 3 years and next year to ensure that performance of its staff is maintained at the highest possible standard?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

The information on the refresher and tactical training provided by the Fire Services Department to fire personnel in the past 3 years and next year is as follows:

Year	Refresher Training (Number of classes/Number of personnel trained)	Tactical Training (Number of classes/Number of personnel trained)
2011	331/1 665	1 098/11 996
2012	185/1 758	928/11 023
2013	409/3 471	887/9 894
2014 (Estimated figures)	660/7 400	980/11 000

Note: The significant growth in the estimated number of classes and personnel trained in refresher training in 2014 over previous years is because personnel are required to attend refresher training regularly (such as once every few years). The figures are derived from the estimated number of personnel required to attend refresher training in 2014.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB314****(Question Serial No. 6040)**Head: (45) Fire Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not SpecifiedProgramme: (1) Fire ServiceControlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityThis question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228 (if applicable)Question (Member Question No. 339):

What is the respective percentage of fire calls met within the graded response time of 1 to 6 minute(s) for built-up areas in the past 3 years?

Within	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
1 minute			
2 minutes			
3 minutes			
4 minutes			
5 minutes			
6 minutes			

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-cheReply:

From 2011 to 2013, the percentage of fire calls in built-up areas handled by the Fire Services Department (FSD) within the graded response time of 6 minutes is as follows:

Time taken to arrive	2011	2012	2013
Within 6 minutes	93.1%	93.3%	93.2%

The FSD does not maintain a further breakdown of the percentage of calls handled within 6 minutes.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB315****(Question Serial No. 6041)**Head: (45) Fire Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not SpecifiedProgramme: (1) Fire ServiceControlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityThis question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228 (if applicable)Question (Member Question No. 340):

What is the respective percentage of fire calls met within graded response time of 9 to 23 minutes for areas of more dispersed risk or isolated developments in the past 3 years?

Within	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
9 minutes			
11 minutes			
14 minutes			
17 minutes			
20 minutes			
23 minutes			

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-cheReply:

The graded response time of the Fire Services Department (FSD) for fire calls in areas of more dispersed risk or isolated developments is 9 to 23 minutes. From 2011 to 2013, the percentage of fire calls in such areas handled by the FSD within the graded response time of 9 to 23 minutes is as follows:

Time taken to arrive	2011	2012	2013
9 to 23 minutes	95.8%	95.7%	96.9%

The FSD does not maintain a further breakdown of the percentage of calls handled within the relevant time.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB316****(Question Serial No. 6042)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 341):

In the Estimates of Expenditure 2014-15, it is stated that the percentages of fire calls met within graded response time of 6 minutes for built-up areas and 9 to 23 minutes for areas of more dispersed risk or isolated developments in 2013 were 93.2% and 96.9% respectively. In other words, 6.8% and 3.1% of such fire calls were not met within the graded response time. In this regard, would the Administration please inform this Committee of the respective percentages of those calls not met within graded response time due to traffic congestion, no fire appliances in the fire station nearest to the fire scene and other causes?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

In 2013, the causes for failing to attend to fire calls within the graded response time and the percentages of such cases are as follows:

Causes for failing to attend to building fire calls within graded response time	Built-up areas (Graded response time of 6 minutes)	Areas of more dispersed risk or isolated developments (Graded response time of 9 to 23 minutes)
	Percentage in the total number of fire calls	Percentage in the total number of fire calls
Traffic and journey-related issues	6.4%	2.8%
Other causes (Callers failed to provide an accurate address, flooding, typhoons, etc.)	0.4%	0.3%
Total	6.8%	3.1%

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB317****(Question Serial No. 6043)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 229 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 343):

How many fire drills, fire safety talks, seminars, exhibitions, meetings and operational visits were attended by the Fire Services Department upon request in each of the past 3 years?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

The number of fire drills, fire safety talks, seminars, exhibitions, meetings and operational visits attended by the Fire Services Department upon request in each of the past 3 years is as follows:

	2011	2012	2013
Fire drills	913	872	950
Fire safety talks	1 725	1 634	1 904
Seminars	10	4	17
Exhibitions	12	11	20
Meetings	92	115	47
Operational visits (including familiarisation visit, etc.)	9 821	9 880	13 599
Total	12 573	12 516	16 537

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**(Question Serial No. 6044)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 229 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 344):

What is the age of each existing fireboat in the Fire Services Department?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

The age of each existing fireboat of the Fire Services Department (FSD) is as follows:

Name of fireboat	Age (year)
Elite	13
Excellence	10
Fireboat No. 2	19
Fireboat No. 3	16
Fireboat No. 4	6
Fireboat No. 5	17
Fireboat No. 7*	24
Fireboat No. 8	6

* The FSD was approved funding by the Legislative Council in 2012 to replace Fireboat No. 7.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 6045)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 230 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 345):

The planned target for 2014 in respect of fire safety requirements being issued within 20 working days for the licensing/registration of schools, child care centres, food premises, places of public entertainment, karaoke establishments, and drug dependent persons treatment and rehabilitation centres following receipt of applications and the required details/plans in full decreases by 4.8% as compared to 2012 and 2013. Please give the reasons.

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

The target of the Fire Services Department (FSD) in respect of fire safety requirements being issued within 20 working days for the licensing/registration of schools, child care centres, food premises, places of public entertainment, karaoke establishments, and drug dependent persons treatment and rehabilitation centres following receipt of applications and the required details/plans in full is 90.0%. This target has been in place for many years. The percentages of the actual performance of the past 2 years (i.e. 2012 and 2013) were both 99.8%.

Given the satisfactory achievement rate of performance in recent years, the FSD sets the planned achievement rate for 2014 at 95.0%, which is higher than the target of 90.0%.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 6046)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 230 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 346):

The number of applications in respect of portable firefighting equipment and fire service installation/equipment processed in 2013 is more than double the amount for 2012 and 2014(estimate). What are the reasons? Did the Administration deploy additional manpower to handle such workload?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

Products containing hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), which include extinguishing media in portable fire extinguishers and fire service installations/equipment (firefighting equipment), are listed in the Ozone Layer Protection Ordinance (Cap. 403) as products containing scheduled substances. Under the Ozone Layer Protection (Products Containing Scheduled Substances) (Import Banning) (Amendment) Regulation passed in December 2009, import of controlled products containing HCFCs into Hong Kong will be prohibited from 2015 onwards. Last year saw an increase in suppliers' applications for replacing their firefighting equipment with those using environment-friendly extinguishing media, thus pushing up the number of applications processed by the Fire Services Department in 2013. The number of such applications is expected to return to normal next year.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**(Question Serial No.: 6047)**Head: (45) Fire Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not SpecifiedProgramme: (3) Ambulance ServiceControlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityThis question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228 (if applicable)Question (Member Question No.: 347):

Please list the number of ambulances of the Fire Services Department by their age.

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-cheReply:

As at 31 March 2014, the number of ambulances of the Fire Services Department by their age is as follows:

Age of ambulances	Number
Less than 1 year	54
1 to 2 years	46
2 to 3 years	66
3 to 4 years	77
4 to 5 years	100
Above 5 years	0
Total:	343

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No.: 6048)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 233 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No.: 348):

In the Estimates of Expenditure 2014-15, it is stated that the percentage of emergency calls answered within the target response time of 12 minutes was 94.4% in 2013. In other words, 5.6% of such calls were not met within the target response time. In this regard, would the Administration please inform this Committee of the respective percentages of those calls not met within target response time due to traffic congestion, unavailability of ambulance in the fire station nearest to the scene and other causes?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

In 2013, 94.4% of the emergency calls were answered within the target response time of 12 minutes, which was higher than the 92.5% pledged by the Fire Services Department. Among the remaining 5.6% of calls which were not answered within the target response time, approximately 4.8% of cases were delayed by traffic and journey-related issues and 0.8% by other causes (e.g. remote locations, flooding, typhoon, etc.).

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB323****(Question Serial No. 6049)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Fire Service, (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 229 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 349):

Please provide a breakdown of fire appliances and ambulances at each fire station of the Fire Services Department at present by type.

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

A breakdown of on-run fire appliances and ambulance vehicles deployed to fire stations and ambulance depots is as follows (excluding training/reserve vehicles):

Region	Number of fire stations and ambulance depots	Number of fire appliances		Number of ambulance vehicles	
		Frontline fire appliances*	Other supporting vehicles#	Ambulances	Other supporting vehicles^
Hong Kong	Fire station: 26 Ambulance depot: 7	56	52	47	9
Kowloon	Fire station: 20 Ambulance depot: 14	65	20	90	23
New Territories	Fire station: 35 Ambulance depot: 17	101	54	125	19
Total	Fire station: 81 Ambulance depot: 38	222	126	262	51

* Frontline fire appliances generally include Hydraulic Platforms, Major Pumps, Major/Light Rescue Units, Turntable Ladders/Aerial Ladder Platforms/Snorkels, and airport rescue and fire-fighting vehicles.

Other supporting fire appliances include Foam Tenders, Hose Layers, Hazmat Tender, Lighting Tenders, Mobile Command Units, Rescue Tenders, etc.

^ Other supporting ambulance vehicles include Emergency Medical Assistant Motorcycles, Mobile Casualty Treatment Centres, Paramedic Equipment Tender, Rapid Response Vehicles and Hospital Transfer Ambulances.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB324****(Question Serial No.: 6050)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 233 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No.: 350):

Please give details and the number of publicity activities and programmes launched by the Administration to educate the public on the proper use of emergency ambulance service in the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

The Fire Services Department conducted the following publicity activities in the past 3 years to educate the public on the proper use of emergency ambulance service:

Publicity activity	2011 (Number/Details)	2012 (Number/Details)	2013 (Number/Details)
Ambulance Service Campaign (Television programme)	1	1	1
Ambulance Elites' Competitive Games	-	-	1
"Do Not Misuse Ambulance Service" Roving Exhibition	3	5	4
School/Community Out-reaching Scheme	46	49	57
Radio series in Happy Daily (Radio programme)	-	2	4
"Do Not Misuse Ambulance Service" Video Production and 4-Panel Comic Drawing Competition	1	1	1
Display of the message of "Do Not Misuse Ambulance Service"	21 days (At advertising light boxes of bus stops)	41 days (Inside train compartments)	28 days (Inside Light Rail train compartments) 62 days (On tram bodies)
Fire Safety Carnival Fire Station and Ambulance Depot Open Day	3	4	7
Television drama series of "Fire Brigade" to promote ambulance service	2 episodes	1 episode	-

Display of posters and banners to promote the message of "Do Not Misuse Ambulance Service" in various districts	280 posters/banners	260 posters/banners	250 posters/banners
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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB325****(Question Serial No. 6057)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Fire service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 407):

What was the number of cases in which Fire Services Department (FSD) staff sustained work injury or fatal work injury at each rank and the percentage of such injuries among the total number of staff at that rank in the past 5 years? What are the activities undertaken by the FSD each year for prevention of work injury and promotion of occupational safety and health respectively?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

The Fire Services Department (FSD) recorded 1 217 cases of general work injury in the past 5 years. The figures by rank are listed below:

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Assistant Divisional Officer	-	1(0.66%)	-	-	-
Senior Station Officer / Station Officer (Operational)	7(1.04%)	12(1.76%)	4(0.59%)	4(0.57%)	10(1.39%)
Principal Fireman (Operational/Marine)	7(1.16%)	6(0.99%)	7(1.15%)	7(1.14%)	5(0.76%)
Principal Fireman (Control)	1(1.72%)	-	-	-	-
Senior Fireman (Operational/Marine)	11(1.09%)	23(2.28%)	16(1.58%)	15(1.47%)	14(1.30%)
Senior Fireman (Control)	-	1(0.84%)	-	1(0.84%)	1(0.85%)
Senior Fireman (Workshops)	2(5.41%)	1(2.70%)	-	-	-
Fireman (Operational/Marine)	93(2.62%)	109(3.07%)	82(2.29%)	77(2.14%)	61(1.74%)
Ambulance Officer	1(1.41%)	-	-	-	-
Principal Ambulanceman	11(4.42%)	10(3.80%)	15(5.70%)	9(3.36%)	6(2.23%)
Senior Ambulanceman	36(5.83%)	47(7.67%)	35(5.33%)	34(5.12%)	33(4.85%)
Ambulanceman	89(5.73%)	95(6.04%)	72(4.33%)	56(3.32%)	46(2.67%)
Supplies Assistant	1(11.11%)	-	-	-	-
Assistant Clerical Officer	-	1(0.64%)	1(0.62%)	-	-
Cook	8(8.70%)	8(8.89%)	8(10.67%)	9(13.04%)	3(4.41%)

Artisan	-	-	-	1(10.00%)	-
Workman II	-	2(4.08%)	1(2.56%)	1(2.63%)	-

() Figures in bracket denotes the percentage among the total number of staff at that rank

Apart from the above, 1 fatal work injury case which involved 1 Senior Fireman (Operational/Marine) was recorded in 2010, representing 0.10% of staff at that rank.

The firefighting and rescue services of the FSD are high-risk operations and the Department has all along attached importance to the occupational safety and health (OSH) of its staff. In April 2008, OSH Unit was established to facilitate the formulation of a better “safety management system” for the Department. The major activities undertaken in recent years for prevention of work injury and promotion of OSH included strengthening OSH training, conducting quarterly safety inspections at workplaces, refining the investigation process of work injury cases, reviewing the wearing guidelines of personal protective equipment, fortifying various OSH promotion campaigns, etc.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 6405)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (3) Ambulance Service
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 233 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 93):

According to the Fire Services Department's information, among the calls for ambulance service, the number of calls which involved the elderly aged 60 or above is 359 853 and 386 071 in 2011 and 2012 respectively, accounting for 50% or more of the total number of calls. In this regard, please provide information on the following:

1. The number and percentage of ambulance service calls which involved the elderly aged 60 or above in 2013;
2. The number of ambulance service calls which involved the elderly over the past 3 years by category, e.g. the elderly living in public housing, private buildings, subvented and private homes for the elderly, etc.;
3. The average cost of handling an ambulance call over the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

1. In 2013, the Fire Services Department (FSD) attended to 385 929 ambulance service calls which involved the elderly aged 60 or above, accounting for 53.7% of the total number of calls.
2. The FSD does not categorise the ambulance calls from the elderly according to the nature of their residence. Such figures are therefore not available.
3. The financial provisions for the Programme of Ambulance Service in the past 3 years were \$1.211 billion, \$1.322 billion and \$1.338 billion (revised estimate) respectively. Under this Programme, the FSD handles emergency and hospital transfer calls, as well as maintains and enhances pre-hospital emergency care knowledge and skills of ambulance personnel through regular and specialised training. It also provides community education programmes and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation training for the general public, organises publicity activities to educate the public on the proper use of emergency ambulance service, etc. The FSD does not have a breakdown of the cost of handling ambulance calls.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No.: 6418)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No.: 342):

Please provide the number of cases in which the fire appliance that first arrived at the scene of the incident was not deployed from a fire station nearest to the scene; and the percentage of such cases among the total number of fire calls in each of the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply:

Upon receiving a fire report, the Fire Services Department (FSD) normally deploys the fire appliances nearest to the fire scene to attend to the call. Whether the appliances are deployed from the fire station nearest to the scene is not a factor of consideration in deployment. Therefore, the FSD has no statistical data on appliances which first arrived at the scene by their respective district.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 4278)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses
Programme: (-) Not Specified
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 237 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 78):

Regarding the manpower arrangement of the Fire Services Department, would the Administration inform this Committee of the following:

1. The number of fire and ambulance personnel who continued to work for the Department through re-employment after retirement in 2013-14 by age, original post and re-employed post;
2. The recurrent expenditure incurred in respect of such re-employment arrangement in 2013-14?

Asked by: Hon. KWOK Wai-keung

Reply:

- 1 & 2. There were no fire or ambulance personnel who continued to work for the Department through re-employment after retirement in 2013-14.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**(Question Serial No. 5428)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 233 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 55):

In 2014-15, the Fire Services Department (FSD) will continue to implement the Rapid Response Vehicle Scheme (the Scheme) to enhance the delivery of paramedic ambulance service, and will plan for the acquisition of a computer system for the provision of post-dispatch advice to callers requesting emergency ambulance service. How many emergency ambulance calls were received by the FSD in the past 3 years? How many fire personnel are required to undertake such work in addition to their own duties? Has effectiveness of the Scheme been evaluated? If yes, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons? What is the estimated cost to be incurred by the Department in acquiring the computer system and when is such equipment expected to be replaced?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Tai-fai

Reply:

The number of emergency ambulance calls received by the Fire Services Department (FSD) in the past 3 years is as follows:

Year	Number of emergency ambulance calls
2011	646 996
2012	683 921
2013	675 424

The FSD launched the Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) Scheme in November 2006. Each RRV is manned by an Ambulance Officer (not by fire personnel in addition to their own duties). The main functions of the Scheme are to provide support to frontline ambulance personnel and perform service quality assurance duties to enhance frontline management and operational efficiency. As at the end of February 2014, the RRVs provided support for a total of 11 988 emergency calls, and conducted 8 377 field audits of emergency ambulance cases and 22 947 inspections. In 2013, the 3 RRVs of the FSD (involving 3 Ambulance Officers) provided support for a total of 1 794 emergency calls, and conducted 1 724 field audits of emergency ambulance cases and 3 250 inspections. The FSD considers the Scheme satisfactory and effective and will continue to implement it with the existing manpower in 2014-15.

Since May 2011, the FSD has been providing simple post-dispatch advice (PDA) to callers requesting emergency ambulance service on certain types of common injuries and sicknesses to help stabilise the conditions of the patients. At present, the FSD provides simple PDA to callers concerning 6 types of illness and injury conditions (i.e. bleeding, fracture and dislocation of limbs, burn, convulsion, heat stroke and hypothermia). The computer system to be acquired will be installed with an internationally-accredited questioning protocol software, by which we may identify more complicated and a wider range of conditions (such as severe injuries and cardiac arrest) and provide more detailed and appropriate PDA to callers, thereby improving patients' conditions and survival rate before arrival of ambulance crew. The FSD intends to consult the Panel on Security on the procurement plan later this year.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**(Question Serial No. 5466)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 234 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 61):

Under this Programme, the Fire Services Department will have a net increase of 65 posts and fill vacancies in 2014-15. Please provide information on the nature, ranks, salaries and job nature of these posts.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

Under this Programme, the Fire Services Department will have a net increase of 65 posts in 2014-15 to cope with the demand for emergency ambulance service. Details are as follows:

Rank	Number	Salary* (\$)	Job nature
Senior Ambulanceman	20	6,790,800	To operate additional ambulance shifts to cope with the increasing demand for emergency ambulance service
Ambulanceman	41	10,058,940	
Senior Ambulance Officer	1	771,540	To be deployed to the ambulance depot at Choi Shun Street, Sheung Shui scheduled for commission in March 2015
Ambulance Officer	2	1,043,160	
Principal Ambulanceman	5	2,068,200	
Senior Ambulanceman	-5	-1,697,700	
Assistant Clerical Officer	1	222,420	
<i>Total:</i>	65	19,257,360	

* Calculated on the basis of relevant notional annual mid-point salary values in 2013-14.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB331

(Question Serial No. 4746)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (-) Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 236 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 151):

Regarding the engagement of agency workers, please provide the following information:

	2013-14 (the latest position)
Number of contracts engaging employment agencies	()
Contract sum paid to each employment agency	()
Length of contract for each employment agency	()
Number of agency workers	()
Responsibilities of the positions held by agency workers	
Monthly salary range of agency workers	
• \$30,001 or above	()
• \$16,001 - \$30,000	()
• \$8,001 - \$16,000	()
• \$6,501 - \$8,000	()
• \$6,240 - \$6,500	()
• below \$6,240	()
Length of service of agency workers	
• over 15 years	()
• 10 to 15 years	()
• 5 to 10 years	()
• 3 to 5 years	()
• 1 to 3 years	()
• less than 1 year	()
Percentage of agency workers among the total number of staff in the Department	()
Percentage of payments to employment agencies among the total staff costs of the Department	()
Number of workers who received severance payment/long service payment/contract gratuity	()
Amount of severance payment/long service payment/contract gratuity paid	()
Number of workers with severance payment/long service payment offset by or contract gratuity calculated from the accrued benefits attributable to employer's contributions to Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF)	()

Amount of severance payment/long service payment offset by or contract gratuity calculated from the accrued benefits attributable to employer's contributions to MPF	()
Number of workers with remunerated meal break	()
Number of workers without remunerated meal break	()
Number of workers on five-day week	()
Number of workers on six-day week	()

() Change in percentage as compared with the same period in 2012-13

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

	2013-14 (as at 31 March 2014)
Number of contracts engaging employment agencies	3 (0%)
Contract sum paid to each employment agency	\$1,327,000 (-18.5%) [Estimated full-year cost]
Length of contract for each employment agency	9 months
Number of agency workers	34 persons (-29.2%)
Responsibilities of the positions held by agency workers	Clerical and procurement services
Monthly salary range of agency workers	
• \$30,001 or above	-
• \$16,001 - \$30,000	1 (Note)
• \$8,001 - \$16,000	33 (+6.5%)
• \$6,501 - \$8,000	0 (-100%)
• \$6,240 - \$6,500	-
• below \$6,240	-
Length of service of agency workers	The employment contracts were entered into between the employment agencies and their employees. The Fire Services Department (FSD) does not keep such information.
• over 15 years	
• 10 to 15 years	
• 5 to 10 years	
• 3 to 5 years	
• 1 to 3 years	
• less than 1 year	
Percentage of agency workers among the total number of staff in the Department	0.3% (-40%)
Percentage of payments to employment agencies among the total staff costs of the Department	0.03% (-25%)
Number of workers who received severance payment/long service payment/contract gratuity	The employment contracts were entered into between the employment agencies and their employees. The FSD does not keep such information.
Amount of severance payment/long service payment/contract gratuity paid	
Number of workers with severance payment/long service payment offset by or contract gratuity calculated from the accrued benefits attributable to employer's contributions to Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF)	
Amount of severance payment/long service payment offset by or contract gratuity calculated from the accrued benefits attributable to employer's contributions to MPF	
Number of workers with remunerated meal break	34 (-29.2%)
Number of workers without remunerated meal break	0 (0%)

Number of workers on five-day week	34 (-29.2%)
Number of workers on six-day week	0 (0%)

() *Change in percentage as compared with the same period in 2012-13*

Note: In the same period of 2012-13, no agency worker was at the salary range of \$16,001-\$30,000.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB332

(Question Serial No. 4747)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses
Programme: (-) Not Specified
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 236 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 152):

Regarding the engagement of outsourced workers, please provide the following information:

	2013-14 (the latest position)
Number of outsourced service contracts	()
Total payments to outsourced service providers	()
Length of contract for each outsourced service provider	()
Number of outsourced workers engaged through outsourced service providers	()
Responsibilities of the positions held by outsourced workers (e.g. customer service, property management, security, cleansing and information technology)	
Monthly salary range of outsourced workers	
• \$30,001 or above	()
• \$16,001 to \$30,000	()
• \$8,001 to \$16,000	()
• \$6,501 to \$8,000	()
• \$6,240 to \$6,500	()
• below \$6,240	()
Length of service of outsourced workers	
• over 15 years	()
• 10 to 15 years	()
• 5 to 10 years	()
• 3 to 5 years	()
• 1 to 3 years	()
• less than 1 year	()
Percentage of outsourced workers among the total number of staff in the Department	()
Percentage of payments to outsourced service providers among the total staff costs of the Department	()
Number of workers who received severance payment/long service payment/contract gratuity	()
Amount of severance payment/long service payment/contract gratuity paid	()

Number of workers with severance payment/long service payment offset by or contract gratuity calculated from the accrued benefits attributable to employer's contributions to Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF)	()
Amount of severance payment/long service payment offset by or contract gratuity calculated from the accrued benefits attributable to employer's contributions to MPF	()
Number of workers with remunerated meal break	()
Number of workers without remunerated meal break	()
Number of workers on five-day week	()
Number of workers on six-day week	()

() Change in percentage as compared with the same period in 2012-13

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

	2013-14 (as at 31 March 2014)
Number of outsourced service contracts	8 (-20%)
Total payments to outsourced service providers	\$41,474,000 (+12.4%) [Estimated full-year cost]
Length of contract for each outsourced service provider	Varies from 12 to 36 months
Number of outsourced workers engaged through outsourced service providers	The number of workers is determined by outsourced service providers according to the service required. The Fire Services Department (FSD) does not have information about the total number of these workers.
Responsibilities of the positions held by outsourced workers (e.g. customer service, property management, security, cleansing and information technology)	Security, cleansing, general services, catering and professional/technical services.
Monthly salary range of outsourced workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$30,001 or above • \$16,001 to \$30,000 • \$8,001 to \$16,000 • \$6,501 to \$8,000 • \$6,240 to \$6,500 • below \$6,240 	Monthly salary of outsourced workers is agreed between the service providers and their employees in the employment contracts. The FSD does not have detailed information about the monthly salary of outsourced workers. If the service contract is mainly related to the employment of non-skilled workers, the monthly salary paid by outsourced services providers to these workers must not be lower than the statutory minimum wage with 1 paid rest day per week.
Length of service of outsourced workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • over 15 years • 10 to 15 years • 5 to 10 years • 3 to 5 years • 1 to 3 years • less than 1 year 	The length of employment of outsourced workers is not specified in the contract in the procurement of outsourced services by Government departments. In engaging outsourced services, the FSD mainly focuses on whether the service provider can fulfill the service requirements set out in the contract. The FSD does not have such information.

Percentage of outsourced workers among the total number of staff in the Department	The number of outsourced workers is determined by the service providers according to the service required. The FSD does not have information about the total number of these workers.
Percentage of payments to outsourced service providers among the total staff costs of the Department	1.1% (+10%)
Number of workers who received severance payment/long service payment/contract gratuity	The employment contracts were entered into between the service providers and their employees. The FSD does not keep such information.
Amount of severance payment/long service payment/contract gratuity paid	
Number of workers with severance payment/long service payment offset by or contract gratuity calculated from the accrued benefits attributable to employer's contributions to Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF)	
Amount of severance payment/long service payment offset by or contract gratuity calculated from the accrued benefits attributable to employer's contributions to MPF	
Number of workers with remunerated meal break Number of workers without remunerated meal break	Whether meal breaks are paid or not is agreed between the outsourced service providers and their employees. The FSD does not keep such information.
Number of workers on five-day week Number of workers on six-day week	The number of working days per week is agreed between the outsourced service providers and their employees when they enter into employment contracts. The FSD does not keep such information.

() Change in percentage as compared with the same period in 2012-13

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB333

(Question Serial No. 4748)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses
Programme: (-) Not Specified
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 236 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 153):

Regarding the employment of non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff, please provide the following information:

	2013-14 (the latest position)
Number of NCSC staff	()
Responsibilities of positions held by NCSC staff	
Salary costs of NCSC staff	()
Monthly salary range of NCSC staff	
• \$30,001 or above	()
• \$16,001 to \$30,000	()
• \$8,001 to \$16,000	()
• \$6,501 to \$8,000	()
• \$6,240 to \$6,500	()
• below \$6,240	()
Length of service of NCSC staff	
• over 15 years	()
• 10 to 15 years	()
• 5 to 10 years	()
• 3 to 5 years	()
• 1 to 3 years	()
• less than 1 year	()
Number of staff converted to civil servants	()
Percentage of NCSC staff among the total number of staff in the Department	()
Percentage of staff costs of NCSC staff among the total staff costs of the Department	()
Number of staff who received severance payment/long service payment/contract gratuity	()
Amount of severance payment/long service payment/contract gratuity paid	()
Number of staff with severance payment/long service payment offset by or contract gratuity calculated from the accrued benefits attributable to employer's contributions to the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF)	()
Amount of severance payment/long service payment offset by or contract gratuity calculated from the accrued benefits attributable to employer's	()

contributions to MPF	
Number of staff with remunerated meal break	()
Number of staff without remunerated meal break	()
Number of staff working on five-day week	()
Number of staff working on six-day week	()

() Change in percentage as compared with the same period in 2012-13

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

	2013-14 (as at 31 December 2013)
Number of NCSC staff	51 (-13.6%)
Responsibilities of positions held by NCSC staff	These positions are responsible for duties relating to telecommunications and information technology, administrative and clerical work, project assistance, building inspection, etc
Salary costs of NCSC staff	About \$12,689,000 (-6.8%)
Monthly salary range of NCSC staff	
• \$30,001 or above	23 (+53.3%)
• \$16,001 to \$30,000	10 (+100%)
• \$8,001 to \$16,000	18 (-53.8%)
• \$6,501 to \$8,000	0 (0%)
• \$6,240 to \$6,500	0 (0%)
• below \$6,240	0 (0%)
Length of service of NCSC staff	
• over 15 years	0 (0%)
• 10 to 15 years	2 (0%)
• 5 to 10 years	10 (-16.7%)
• 3 to 5 years	0 (-100%)
• 1 to 3 years	14 (-54.8%)
• less than 1 year	25 (+92.3%)
Number of staff converted to civil servants	[There is currently no mechanism to convert NCSC staff to civil servants.]
Percentage of NCSC staff among the total number of staff in the Department	0.51% (-13.6%)
Percentage of staff costs of NCSC staff among the total staff costs of the Department	0.33% (-8.3%)
Number of staff who received severance payment/long service payment/contract gratuity	0/1/26
Amount of severance payment/long service payment/contract gratuity paid	0/About \$21,000/About \$662,000
Number of staff with severance payment/long service payment offset by or contract gratuity calculated from the accrued benefits attributable to employer's contributions to the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF)	0/1/0
Amount of severance payment/long service payment offset by or contract gratuity calculated from the accrued benefits attributable to	0/About \$87,000/0

employer's contributions to MPF	
Number of staff with remunerated meal break	51 (-13.6%)
Number of staff without remunerated meal break	0 (0%)
Number of staff working on five-day week	51 (-13.6%)
Number of staff working on six-day week	0 (0%)

() Change in percentage as compared with the same period in 2012-13

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 5243)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses
Programme: (-) Not Specified
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 237 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 19):

What are the estimates of the Fire Services Department for duty visits or exchanges on Mainland China in 2014-15? Please inform this Committee of the proposed themes for the duty visits or exchanges on Mainland China in 2014-15. How does the Administration avoid the conduct of non-official activities during the duty visits? And how does the Administration avoid the application for change of visiting locations from becoming a mere formality?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yuk-man

Reply:

Duty visits conducted by the Fire Services Department (FSD) are subject to operational needs. The duty visits/exchanges on Mainland China include conferences, official visits to relevant authorities and professional exchanges.

The FSD does not make an estimate for duty visits by destination country or region. The FSD's estimate for overall duty visits in 2014-15 is similar to the expenditure of the past year. The expenditure for 2013-14 (as at 28 February) was around \$2.1 million.

To ensure that civil servants' applications for duty visits are prudently handled, applications from Heads of Departments (HoDs) should be approved by the respective Permanent Secretary or Secretary of the Bureau. Applications from officers below HoD level should be approved by Permanent Secretaries/HoDs or by senior officers not below Assistant Director level. The FSD has always strictly adhered to the said approval procedures. In considering such applications, the approving officers will consider including the purpose of visit, duration, number and frequency of such visits, the appropriateness of the ranking and number of the officers involved, etc.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**(Question Serial No. 4995)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 230 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 53):

In the past 2 years, the Fire Services Department (FSD) issued about 15 000 fire safety directions to composite buildings but only approximately 36% of them have been complied with/discharged. According to the records recently submitted by the Security Bureau to the Legislative Council, only about 28% of the 92 336 fire safety directions issued by the FSD under the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance have been complied with. What measures are in place for the FSD to assist property owners in complying with fire safety directions?

Asked by: Hon. WU Chi-wai

Reply:

To the knowledge of the FSD, some building owners may have genuine difficulties in complying with certain fire service installation (FSI) requirements on account of the physical constraints and/or spatial problems of the buildings, as well as the lack of sufficient financial support. Having regard to the merits of individual cases, the FSD considers alternative proposals from the owners in a flexible and pragmatic manner on the premise that the basic level of fire safety for these buildings is not compromised.

The following measures are taken to improve the compliance rates of directions issued by the FSD for target composite buildings:

1. Actively arranging meetings with the owners

Thematic seminars are arranged on a district/area basis for the concerned owners of target composite buildings to help them better understand the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572). Fire services personnel are ready to meet with the owners to explain the requirements and content in the directions and assist them in solving problems that may be encountered in carrying out the improvement works.

2. Continuing to explore and adopt a flexible and pragmatic approach to help the owners to comply with the fire safety improvement measures.

The Administration adopts a flexible and pragmatic approach in enforcing the Ordinance. For example, the FSD considers allowing the provision of improvised hose reel systems in buildings if there are spatial constraints on the provision of hose reel systems and water tanks in the buildings.

The FSD is now conducting a study on the scope of relaxing the water tank size of hose reel systems to provide further flexibility to the owners in complying with fire safety requirements.

3. Issuing reminding letters to the owners

Case officers have been reminded to carry out periodic progress checks in a timely manner and issue

reminding letters to the owners if it is noted that they make no progress in the compliance of the directions without reasonable causes.

4. Financial support

The Buildings Department, the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Urban Renewal Authority have been running financial assistance schemes, including the Building Safety Loan Scheme, Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme and Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners, to help owners of private buildings maintain and repair their buildings. Fire safety improvement works pertaining to the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance have been incorporated into the list of works eligible for subsidies or loans under these schemes. The application procedures of these schemes have also been streamlined. Owners may make applications under multiple schemes by completing a set of application forms under the Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme. Leaflets of the aforesaid financial assistance schemes are attached to the directions issued by the FSD to the building owners to facilitate their understanding of the details of these schemes.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 5085)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (-) Not Specified
Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (Mr. CHAN Chor-kam)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume 1 Page 228 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 153):

Regarding the provision of quarters to departmental staff, would the Administration inform this Committee of the following:

1. Were there any departmental quarters left idle in the past 5 years? If yes, please provide information on all these idle staff quarters, including their names, locations, site area, number of units and their planned use in future;
2. Are there any quarters left idle for more than 5 years? If yes, please provide information on all these idle staff quarters, including their names, locations, site area, number of units and the date of becoming idle; whether the Government Property Agency has been notified to resume such quarters;
3. Was there any new government land allocated for use as staff quarters in the past 3 years? If yes, please provide information on these additional staff quarters, including their names, locations, site area and number of units.

Asked by: Hon. WU Chi-wai

Reply:

1. The Fire Services Department (FSD) had no departmental quarters left idle (i.e. quarters left vacant without any planned use) in the past 5 years.
2. The FSD has no quarters left idle (i.e. quarters left vacant without any planned use) for more than 5 years.
3. The FSD was not allocated any additional government land for use as staff quarters in the past 3 years. Among the projects to be expedited as stated in the 2014 Policy Address, the FSD's project of a site area of 12 430 square metres at Pak Shing Kok, Tseung Kwan O will provide 352 units.