

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(E)023

(Question Serial No. 3230)

Head: (42) Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified

Programme: (1) Energy Supply; Electrical, Gas and Nuclear Safety

Controlling Officer: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (POON Kwok-ying)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

The estimated expenditure of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) on the electricity and gas safety in 2025-26 is 4.3% higher than the estimate in 2024-25. Please inform this Committee of the reason(s) why the number of follow-up inspections and quality assurance visits conducted by the EMSD will decrease from 2 456 in 2023-24 and 2 516 in 2024-25 to 2 100 in 2025-26 despite the increase in the estimate.

Though the EMSD has explained that the increase in the number of inspections and visits in the past 2 years was due to a gas incident that happened at a restaurant in August 2023, while the number of inspections and visits has decreased by more than 16% at one fell swoop in 2025-26, will the EMSD reconsider uplifting the target number of inspections and visits?

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.:33)

Reply:

The increased provision of about 4.3% in 2025-26 against the revised estimate in 2024-25 under Programme (1) Energy Supply: Electrical, Gas and Nuclear Safety is mainly due to the additional provision required for electricity safety and hydrogen development.

Regarding the arrangements for inspections, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has been adopting a risk-based approach to allocate its resources. In view of the gas incident at a restaurant in August 2023, the EMSD allocated additional resources in 2023-2024 to step up inspections at restaurants and outreach publicity work. After the implementation of these measures, the gas safety condition of restaurants has been significantly improved, with the associated risks having been effectively controlled. As a result, the number of follow-up inspections and quality assurance visits in 2025-26 will return to the level of about 2 100 per year prior to the occurrence of the aforementioned gas incident.

The EMSD has gained a clearer understanding of the gas safety condition of restaurants during the past inspections. In 2025-26, the EMSD will continue to focus on conducting

inspections at restaurants with higher risks, and flexibly adjust its strategy based on the actual situation, with a view to ensuring public safety.

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