

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(E)201

(Question Serial No. 3459)

Head: (100) Marine Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (2) Port Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Marine (Mr S.F. WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

The Pollution Control Unit of the Marine Department (MD) is mainly responsible for providing marine refuse cleansing services and handling oil discharges into sea. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. How many tonnes of marine refuse were removed from various waters of Hong Kong in each of the past 3 years?
2. How many prosecutions were instituted by MD against marine littering in each of the past 3 years?
3. How many oil discharge incidents occurred in the waters of Hong Kong in each of the past 3 years?
4. What is the average cost of handling oil discharges into sea at present? If the vessel involved in an oil discharge incident can be identified after investigation, will the cost of handling the incident be recovered?
5. Apart from oil discharges into sea caused by accidents, spillage may also be caused by the bunkering of vessels, and engine oil used in the operations on the decks of vessels may also leak into the sea and cause pollution. In the past year, has MD carried out inspections, issued warnings and instituted prosecutions against the above situations? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

1. The amount of floating refuse collected by the Marine Department (MD) from the waters of Hong Kong in the past 3 years is tabulated below:

Amount of floating refuse collected by MD from the waters of Hong Kong (the actual weight in tonnes)	
2022	2 662.3
2023	2 404.2
2024	2 281.3

As MD does not maintain separate statistics on the actual weight of floating refuse collected from various waters, no such breakdown is available.

- The number of prosecutions instituted by MD against marine littering in the past 3 years is tabulated below:

Number of prosecutions instituted by MD against marine littering	
2022	17
2023	10
2024	8

- According to the records of MD, the number of oil discharge incidents occurred in the waters of Hong Kong in the past 3 years is tabulated below:

Number of oil discharge incidents handled by MD in the waters of Hong Kong	
2022	47
2023	47
2024	71

- MD will send officers to the scene to investigate each report of oil discharge incident and arrange for oil spill clean-up as soon as oil spill is found in the waters at the scene. If it is found in the course of investigation that the vessel concerned, its owner and its master are responsible for handling the oil spill caused by the vessel, MD will institute prosecution action against the owner or the master of the vessel concerned in accordance with the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance (Cap. 548) or the Shipping and Port Control Ordinance (Cap. 313). Apart from that, MD will also recover the relevant costs incurred by the Government in cleaning up the oil spill from the vessel owner concerned in accordance with the Oil Pollution (Land Use and Requisition) Ordinance (Cap. 247).

As MD does not maintain statistics on the average cost of handling oil discharges into sea, no such figures are available.

- In addition to regular patrols in various waters of Hong Kong, officers of MD also conduct surprise inspections on local oil tankers from time to time, so as to strengthen the prevention of oil discharges into sea caused by the bunkering of vessels and oil leakage from deck machinery onboard. Even if no offence is found during the surprise inspections, officers of MD will carry out publicity and education work for crew members after the inspections to enhance their awareness of the prevention of oil discharges into sea.