

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(W)252

(Question Serial No. 4911)

Head: (60) Highways Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (2) District and Maintenance Works
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (K K LAU)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question (Member Question No. 337)

1. Over the past two years, how many complaints regarding overgrown vegetation obstructing traffic flow lodged by the districts did the Department receive each year? What are the procedures for handling these complaints and the time required to improve the situation in general? Will the Department seek advice from tree specialists before taking action to improve the situation to avoid excessive trimming?
2. Does the Department outsource the aforesaid tasks to contractors? What are the expenses involved? Have any contractors been penalised for poor performance (e.g. excessive trimming or sloppiness, etc.) in the past? What are the details?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth

Reply:

The Highways Department (HyD) is responsible for the maintenance of vegetation along expressways and at roadside slopes, together with other maintenance works for public roads in Hong Kong. The day-to-day inspections and maintenance works are carried out by contractors engaged by HyD, and pruning of overgrown is part of the contractors' duties. Pruning of overgrown constitutes only a minor portion of the maintenance work which the contractors are required to carry out under the maintenance contracts. There is no separate breakdown dedicated solely for such works.

When complaints on overgrown vegetation are received, HyD will conduct inspections to identify any imminent danger to road users, and if affirmative arrange for pruning of overgrown branches. The subsequent pruning works are supervised by experienced site personnel and are limited to the extent required to address the imminent danger. Specialist advice will be sought if situation warranted. The time required to arrange and complete the pruning works depends on the exact location, adjoining traffic conditions and extent of works. In the past two years, HyD has received the following number of complaints on overgrown vegetation obstructing road users.

	Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	New Territories	Total
2012	34	21	95	150
2013	38	20	97	155

The performance of the contractors on pruning of overgrown vegetation has generally been satisfactory.