

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(W)153

(Question Serial No. 6128)

Head: (60) Highways Department

Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified

Programme: (2) District and Maintenance Works
(4) Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (Daniel K W CHUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Over the past five years, has the Highways Department engaged any arborists through outsourcing for providing tree maintenance and pruning services? If so, what were the outsourcing contract sums each year? What are the frequency of tree maintenance, pruning and felling per year and the number of trees involved?

Asked by: Hon HUI Chi-fung (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 67)

Reply:

The Highways Department (HyD) is responsible for maintaining vegetation on slopes under its maintenance and within the boundaries of expressways. The department carries out vegetation maintenance through outsourcing to contractors with tree management staff holding qualifications in arboriculture.

Tree maintenance forms part of the maintenance term contracts entered into between HyD and its contractors. Since there is no separate itemisation on the employment of tree management staff under the contracts, a detailed cost breakdown is not available.

The HyD is responsible for maintaining approximately 0.6 million trees. Its contractors conduct regular tree inspections at least once every six months and carry out necessary maintenance operations, such as pruning, pest control and removal of tree branches or, if they pose a hazard to the public, whole trees.

A breakdown on the number of trees removed attributable to health or structural problems, or to vegetation maintenance operations (such as removal of invasive species) in the past five financial years is shown below –

Financial Year	Number of trees removed (rounded to the nearest 100)
2013-14	2 700
2014-15	2 200
2015-16	2 600
2016-17	2 200
2017-18 ^[Note 1]	1 900

The number of vegetation maintenance and pruning is substantial, and we have not compiled any statistics on such operations.

Note 1:

This is an estimate on the number of trees removed, projected up to the end of March 2018.

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