

LCQ 8: Regulation of contents of advertisements

Following is a question by the Hon Howard Young and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Dr Patrick Ho, in the Legislative Council today (Feb 22):

Question:

On the 9th of last month, a company placed on a number of newspapers an anonymous advertisement which looked like a feature report, alleging that certain electrical products which compete with the company's business were potentially hazardous. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether it has examined the contents of the advertisement to see if they are founded; if it has, of the results of its examination;

(b) of the number of complaints received over the past three years by the authorities concerned about advertisements with misrepresented information, the procedure adopted for handling such complaints and their outcomes; how the contents of advertisements are subject to regulation by existing legislation and the penalties the court may impose on those who place advertisements with misrepresented information; and

(c) how it monitors the contents the advertisements in newspapers and magazines and whether it will step up its monitoring efforts; if so, of the details, if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

Madam President,

(a) The Consumer Council has studied the contents of the advertisement which the Honourable Howard Young might be referring to, and found that the various hazards mentioned therein are not consistent with the results of a comprehensive test conducted by the Council in 2004 on a number of similar products (i.e., single-hob portable induction cookers often used for hot-pots), in which all the tested samples scored satisfactorily in terms of safety, performance and ease of use. Given the public concern, the Council is considering conducting further tests on the relevant products. Meanwhile, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department will continue to closely monitor household electrical appliances sold in Hong Kong to ensure compliance with the Electrical Products (Safety) Regulation.

(b)and(c) The requested information is set out in the Annex.

Ends/Wednesday, February 22, 2006

NNNN