

LCQ15: Designating a sitting-out area in Tai Po as a smoking area

Following is a question by the Hon Li Kwok-ying and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (June 11):

Question :

I have recently received complaints from members of the public that next to Tai Po Centre, a sitting-out area which is adjacent to a liquefied petroleum gas store has been designated as a smoking area. This may endanger the lives of the residents nearby. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether:

(a) it has received complaints from members of the public concerning the aforesaid smoking area since the commencement of the relevant provisions of the Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Ordinance 2006 on January 1, 2007; if so, of the follow-up actions taken;

(b) it has assessed if smoking by members of the public in that area has safety implications; if it has, of the assessment results; if it has not, the reasons for that;

(c) it will consider designating the sitting-out area as a no smoking area; and

(d) it has compiled statistics on the current number of public pleasure grounds throughout the territory which are adjacent to liquefied petroleum gas stores and allow smoking; if so, of the details?

Reply :

Madam President,

(a) to (c) The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), after consultation with the Tai Po District Council, has designated On Pong Road Sitting-out Area in Tai Po as a smoking venue in the district with effect from January 1, 2007. The LCSD has received some complaints against the designation of that smoking venue from some residents of the nearby housing estates raising concern over the safety implication associated with the adjacent liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) storage facility. The LCSD has obtained advice from the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) that the design of the LPG storage facility meets the standards specified in the Gas Safety Ordinance. As the LPG tanks are installed in underground vessel chambers, the designation of On Pong Road Sitting-out Area as a smoking venue will not impair the safety of the storage facility. Moreover, taking into consideration the frequent use of the smoking venue by smokers in the area including

residents in the neighbourhood and workers from nearby shopping centres and restaurants, the LCSD has come to the view that there is a need to keep the sitting-out area as a smoking venue. The LCSD has explained in detail to the complainants the rationale for such an arrangement and relayed the professional advice from the EMSD on the safety of LPG storage facility to ease their worries.

(d) Apart from On Pong Road Sitting-out Area in Tai Po, the smoking area in Kwong Fuk Park in Tai Po is the only other smoking area in the leisure venues under the management of the LCSD that is located adjacent to an LPG storage facility. The EMSD has also indicated that the design of that LPG storage facility meets the standards specified in the Gas Safety Ordinance. As the LPG tanks are installed in underground vessel chambers, the designation of that smoking area will not impair the safety of the LPG storage facility.

Ends/Wednesday, June 11, 2008