

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

CSTB180

(Question Serial No. 2202)

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Recreation and Sports

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Vincent LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism

Question:

As reported, a number of public swimming pools and beaches were closed due to inadequate lifeguards in recent years. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

- (1) a breakdown by District Council district of (i) the number of days and (ii) the longest period of closure or partial closure of Government swimming pools and beaches due to manpower shortage in each month of the past 5 years;
- (2) the (i) establishment, (ii) number of staff leaving the service, (iii) wastage rate, and (iv) vacancy rate of the lifeguards of public swimming pools and beaches in the past 5 years; and
- (3) whether it has adopted any measures to (i) retain the serving lifeguards, (ii) strengthen the recruitment and (iii) train the lifeguards, with regard to the shortage of lifeguards? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAU Siu-chung (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

- (1) The days of full or partial closure of public swimming pools due to inadequate lifeguards in the past 5 years are at **Annex I**. The days of full closure of gazetted beaches are at **Annex II**.
- (2) The statistics on lifeguards in government swimming pools and beaches in the past 5 years are at **Annex III**.
- (3) The LCSD has adopted a series of measures to attract more qualified persons to work as lifeguards and to retain serving lifeguards, including enhancing the remuneration package of seasonal lifeguards such as increasing by 2.5% the monthly salary which, together with end-of-contract gratuity, may reach over \$24,500 in 2023 depending on

their duty posts and the types of lifeguard awards and first aid certificates they hold, and offering an additional end-of-contract gratuity of \$2,000 to subsidise seasonal lifeguards in obtaining/revalidating the related lifeguard awards. The mobility of seasonal lifeguards is higher than that of civil service lifeguards due to their short-term job nature, and the recruitment effectiveness of seasonal lifeguards is more dependent on employment conditions at the time of recruitment when compared to long-term jobs. To improve the stability of the lifeguard workforce, the LCSD will increase 110 full-year full-time lifeguard posts on 2-year contract terms in 2023-24.

To attract new blood to join the profession, the LCSD has stepped up publicity efforts to promote recruitment exercises by placing recruitment advertisements on public transport, in popular newspapers and on social media websites, and displaying recruitment posters at swimming pools/beaches with higher usage rates in the 18 districts. Letters and recruitment posters have also been sent and distributed to secondary schools/post-secondary institutions/relevant organisations to proactively appeal to a wide spectrum of people to join lifeguarding. To further attract more persons without any lifesaving qualifications to participate in lifeguard training and become lifeguards, the LCSD launched the Combined Seasonal Lifeguard Training Scheme in 2023. A “first-hire-then-train” approach is adopted to allow persons without any lifesaving qualifications to take part in full-time mode training and practical training of pool and beach lifeguards, so that they can obtain the Pool Lifeguard Award and/or Beach Lifeguard Award to become lifeguards of the LCSD.

In addition, to further retain lifeguards, a higher end-of-contract gratuity (15% for the whole period) has been offered to full-time seasonal lifeguards who were employed for 6 consecutive months or above in the swimming seasons of the past 3 years. Moreover, the LCSD has sent letters to former seasonal lifeguards inviting their applications for contract lifeguard posts in the coming swimming season, and made an early appeal to serving seasonal lifeguards whose contracts will soon expire to apply for the same.

**Days of closure of public swimming pools
due to inadequate lifeguards in the past 5 years**

Swimming Pool		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
		Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure
Central and Western											
1	Kennedy Town Swimming Pool	-	142	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	65
2	Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park Swimming Pool	-	5	2	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eastern District											
3	Chai Wan Swimming Pool	-	179	-	163	-	37	-	183	-	169
4	Island East Swimming Pool	-	14	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	95
5	Siu Sai Wan Swimming Pool	-	1	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southern District											
6	Pao Yue Kong Swimming Pool	-	195	-	184	-	-	-	29	-	169
Wan Chai											
7	Morrison Hill Swimming Pool	-	151	2	56	-	44	-	74	-	102
8	Victoria Park Swimming Pool	-	20	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kowloon City											
9	Ho Man Tin Swimming Pool	-	149	-	114	-	-	-	-	-	103
10	Kowloon Tsai Swimming Pool ⁽²⁾	-	75	-	49	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	Tai Wan Shan Swimming Pool	-	205	-	180	-	8	-	-	-	134

Swimming Pool		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
		Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure
Kwun Tong											
12	Jordan Valley Swimming Pool	-	27	-	26	-	-	-	44	-	133
13	Kwun Tong Swimming Pool	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	Lam Tin Swimming Pool	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	4	-	-
Sham Shui Po											
15	Lai Chi Kok Park Swimming Pool	-	145	-	148	-	88	-	25	-	209
16	Lei Cheng Uk Swimming Pool	-	182	-	214	-	99	-	121	-	173
17	Sham Shui Po Park Swimming Pool	-	206	-	199	-	99	-	96	-	230
Wong Tai Sin											
18	Hammer Hill Road Swimming Pool	-	9	-	35	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	Morse Park Swimming Pool ⁽²⁾	-	6	-	-	-	13	-	-	-	-
Yau Tsim Mong											
20	Kowloon Park Swimming Pool	-	154	-	148	-	43	-	-	-	146
21	Tai Kok Tsui Swimming Pool	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Islands											
22	Tung Chung Swimming Pool	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	14	-	142
23	Mui Wo Swimming Pool	-	-	-	-	-	-	29	-	-	-

Swimming Pool		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
		Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure
Kwai Tsing											
24	Kwai Shing Swimming Pool	-	205	-	214	-	51	-	74	-	169
25	North Kwai Chung Jockey Club Swimming Pool	-	116	1	188	-	-	-	74	-	169
26	Tsing Yi Swimming Pool	-	162	-	214	-	58	-	74	-	169
North District											
27	Fanling Swimming Pool	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	17	-	33
28	Sheung Shui Swimming Pool	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	25	-	16
Sai Kung											
29	Sai Kung Swimming Pool	-	185	-	204	-	43	-	103	-	142
30	Tseung Kwan O Swimming Pool	-	193	-	195	-	43	-	15	-	169
Sha Tin											
31	Hin Tin Swimming Pool	-	161	-	184	-	-	-	-	-	-
32	Ma On Shan Swimming Pool	-	8	-	12	-	44	-	29	-	25
33	Sha Tin Jockey Club Swimming Pool	-	124	-	145	-	44	-	-	-	-
Tai Po											
34	Tai Po Swimming Pool	-	6	-	17	-	31	-	-	-	173
Tsuen Wan											
35	Shing Mun Valley Swimming Pool	-	63	-	92	-	19	-	56	-	90
36	Tsuen King Circuit Wu Chung Swimming Pool	-	210	-	103	-	-	1	60	-	150

Swimming Pool		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
		Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure	Full Closure	Partial Closure
Tuen Mun											
37	The Jockey Club Yan Oi Tong Swimming Pool	-	37	-	68	-	-	-	74	-	169
38	Tuen Mun North West Swimming Pool	-	74	-	103	-	-	-	23	-	122
39	Tuen Mun Swimming Pool	-	75	-	133	-	-	-	74	-	169
Yuen Long											
40	Tin Shui Wai Swimming Pool	-	27	-	30	-	-	-	-	-	-
41	Yuen Long Swimming Pool	-	116	-	99	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes

- (1) Wan Chai Swimming Pool, Tsing Yi Southwest Swimming Pool, Ping Shan Tin Shui Wai Swimming Pool and Tung Cheong Street Swimming Pool (service commenced in August 2022) were not fully or partially closed due to inadequate lifeguards in the past 5 years.
- (2) Kowloon Tsai Swimming Pool has been closed since 2020 for re-provisioning works which are expected to be completed in 2024-25. Morse Park Swimming Pool has been undergoing re-provisioning works in phases since November 2018. Its indoor pool and outdoor pools are reopened for public use starting from March and April 2023 respectively.
- (3) In view of the situation of COVID-19, all public swimming pools were closed during the following periods:
 - (i) from 29 January to 20 May, from 15 July to 17 September and from 2 to 31 December 2020;
 - (ii) from 1 January to 1 April 2021; and
 - (iii) from 7 January to 11 or 15 May 2022.

Annex II to Reply Serial No. CSTB180**Days of closure of gazetted beaches
due to inadequate lifeguards in the past 5 years**

Beach		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Southern District						
1	Big Wave Bay Beach	-	-	21	-	123
2	Middle Bay Beach	-	-	53	213	180
3	Shek O Beach	-	1	-	-	-
4	Stanley Main Beach	-	-	-	-	48
5	South Bay Beach	-	1	41	152	123
6	Repulse Bay Beach	-	1	-	-	-
7	Deep Water Bay Beach	1	-	-	-	-
8	St. Stephen's Beach	-	-	53	213	180
9	Chung Hom Kok Beach	-	-	53	213	180
10	Turtle Cove Beach	-	-	53	213	180
Tuen Mun						
11	Cafeteria Old Beach	-	-	53	213	180
12	Castle Peak Beach	-	1	21	182	180
13	Golden Beach	-	-	-	-	1
14	Cafeteria New Beach	-	1	21	152	124
15	Butterfly Beach	-	1	-	-	-
16	Kadoorie Beach	-	-	53	213	56
Tsuen Wan						
17	Ting Kau Beach	-	-	21	152	56
18	Anglers' Beach ⁽²⁾	-	-	53	213	-
19	Approach Beach	-	-	41	213	180
20	Hoi Mei Wan Beach	-	-	53	213	180
Sai Kung						
21	Silverstrand Beach	1	1	21	-	-
22	Clear Water Bay First Beach	-	1	41	213	123
23	Clear Water Bay Second Beach	-	6	-	-	-
24	Trio Beach	-	-	21	152	48
25	Kiu Tsui Beach	-	-	53	213	180

Beach		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Islands						
26	Kwun Yam Beach	-	1	53	213	180
27	Upper Cheung Sha Beach	-	-	53	213	180
28	Pui O Beach	-	1	-	106	-
29	Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach	-	1	-	14	28
30	Hung Shing Yeh Beach	-	1	-	-	-
31	Tong Fuk Beach	-	-	53	213	180
32	Lo So Shing Beach	-	2	53	213	180
33	Lower Cheung Sha Beach	-	-	41	161	93

Notes

- (1) Beaches which were not closed due to inadequate lifeguards in the past 5 years were not listed in the above table.
- (2) Anglers' Beach has been closed since 29 November 2021 for conversion works of the Main Building.
- (3) In view of the situation of COVID-19, all beaches were closed during the following periods:
 - (i) from 29 January to 22 May, from 15 July to 2 November and from 10 to 31 December 2020;
 - (ii) from 1 January to 1 April 2021; and
 - (iii) from 7 January to 4 May 2022.

Statistics on lifeguards in government swimming pools and beaches in the past 5 years

Year	No. of civil service lifeguards						No. of seasonal lifeguards (SLGs) ⁽⁵⁾ (as at 1 August)		
	Establishment (as at 1 August)	No. of vacancies (as at 1 August)	Vacancy rate (as at 1 August)	Strength (as at the first day of the year)	No. of lifeguards leaving the service ⁽¹⁾	Wastage rate ⁽¹⁾	Basic requirement	No. of SLGs employed	No. of SLGs leaving the service
2018-19	1 205	19	1.58%	1 182	6	0.51%	953	674	101
2019-20	1 291	42	3.25%	1 198	3	0.25%	848	480	68
2020-21	1 375	25	1.82%	1 262	4	0.32%	Note ⁽²⁾	308 ⁽³⁾	11
2021-22	1 388	11	0.79%	1 335	26	1.95%		282 ⁽³⁾	43
2022-23	1 411	35	2.48%	1 354	26 ⁽⁴⁾	1.92%		270 ⁽³⁾	28

Notes

- (1) The numbers of lifeguards leaving the service due to resignation are calculated based on financial year, i.e. from 1 April each year to 31 March in the following year.
- (2) In view of the COVID-19 epidemic and the directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), the requirements of SLGs from 2020-21 to 2022-23 changed subject to the actual conditions for opening and the operational needs of venues during the epidemic.
- (3) In view of the COVID-19 epidemic, public swimming pools under the LCSD were closed on multiple occasions. The selection interviews and trade tests for SLGs originally scheduled during these periods were suspended accordingly.
- (4) Statistics as at 28 February 2023.
- (5) Since the SLGs are not part of the civil service, no statistics on their establishment are available. The recruitment target for SLGs depends on the manpower demand of the respective years. Therefore, the wastage rate cannot be calculated.