

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(E)227

(Question Serial No. 3611)

Head: (42) Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): Not specified

Programme: (1) Energy Supply; Electrical, Gas and Nuclear Safety

Controlling Officer: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (POON Kwok-ying)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

Earlier, there were premises using liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cassette cookers or town gas cookers without the GU mark, resulting in incidents like explosions. It was known that some members of the public would bring appliances without the GU mark, including devices like “energy-saving rings”, from other places or through online shopping platforms into Hong Kong. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the number of incidents involving the use of appliances without the GU mark and the number of people injured in each of the past 3 years;
2. the numbers of referrals and reports received, which involved the use of appliances without the GU mark or “energy-saving rings”, in each of the past 3 years;
3. the number of incidents involving the use of “energy-saving rings” and the number of people injured in each of the past 3 years;
4. whether the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department took the initiative to conduct inspections of these appliances in each of the past 3 years, and whether these appliances included town gas water heaters, LPG water heaters, LPG cassette cookers and appliances for outdoor activities;
5. whether LPG cassette cookers with a built-in rechargeable LPG container, which can be operated without connecting to LPG cartridges after the container has been charged, have obtained the GU mark; if yes, the details; if no, the reasons and whether rechargeable appliances do not comply with the safety requirements in Hong Kong; and
6. whether the Government would step up publicity, inspection and enforcement to ensure gas safety in view of the recent increase in the number of cases involving the use of LPG cassette cookers or town gas cookers without the GU mark as reported?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 121)

Reply:

1. The numbers of incidents and casualties involving non-approved domestic gas appliances in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of incidents	Number of casualties
2021	1	1
2022	0	0
2023	1	2

2. The numbers of referrals and reported cases involving non-approved domestic gas appliances and “energy-saving rings” on gas cookers in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

Year	Non-approved domestic gas appliances	“Energy-saving rings” on gas cookers
2021	11	0
2022	3	0
2023	25	0

3. The numbers of incidents and casualties involving the use of “energy-saving rings” on gas cookers in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of incidents	Number of casualties
2021	0	0
2022	0	0
2023	2	6

4. In accordance with the Gas Safety Ordinance (Cap. 51), all domestic gas appliances including gas water heaters, gas cookers and portable liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cassette cookers supplied or sold in Hong Kong shall have the approval in writing from the Gas Authority (i.e. the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services) and bear the GU mark on the appliances. To ensure the safe use of gas installations by the public, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) requires the registered gas supply companies (RGSCs) to conduct regular safety inspections of the gas installations for their domestic customers once every 18 months, where the inspections cover town gas or LPG water heaters, gas cookers and pipes, etc. If a non-approved gas appliance is found to have been installed in the residential premises during the inspection, the RGSC will suspend the gas supply immediately and refer the case to the EMSD for investigation and follow-up. For portable LPG cassette cookers, the EMSD will also arrange staff to conduct inspections in restaurants regularly to ensure that the portable LPG cassette cookers used are of approved models, and to convey gas safety messages to persons-in-charge of the restaurants. In the past 3 years, the EMSD conducted a total of about 2 000 safety inspections in restaurants. For gas appliances specifically

designed for outdoor activities, they shall comply with relevant recognised international/national safety and quality standards where approval from the EMSD is not required. The EMSD may require the suppliers to provide relevant proof when necessary in order to safeguard public safety.

5. All domestic gas appliances supplied or sold in Hong Kong shall have the approval in writing from the Gas Authority (i.e. the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services) and bear the GU mark on the appliances. Approval of individual appliance models is subject to the compliance of the actual design, configuration and safety performance with the relevant safety requirements. So far, the EMSD has not received any application for LPG cassette cookers with built-in rechargeable LPG container. Therefore, there is no case of approval for such gas appliances given by the EMSD.
6. With a view to effectively disseminating the latest information on purchase and use of gas appliances and gas safety to the public and stakeholders, the EMSD has been conducting publicity and educational work through various channels, including:
 - (a) broadcasting of Announcements in the Public Interest, distribution of leaflets, and placing advertisements in various media, including the Mass Transit Railway, buses, trams, online newspapers and shopping platforms;
 - (b) making use of social media platforms and interviews on television programmes;
 - (c) conducting outreach work and visiting specific communities, such as the elderly, foreign domestic helpers and students; and
 - (d) holding safety talks for property management companies, commercial and industrial gas consumers, gas installers, etc.

Apart from inspections in restaurants, the EMSD will also conduct regular inspections in retail shops in various districts and closely monitor online shopping platforms to check whether there is sale of non-approved gas appliances. If any suspected contravention is found, follow-up investigation will be immediately carried out and prosecution action will be considered. The EMSD will continue stepping up the publicity, educational and inspection work to promote gas safety.

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