

**Drinking Water Safety Advisory Committee
Fifteenth Meeting**

Date : 2 August 2024 (Friday)
Time : 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Venue : Conference Room 7, G/F, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong / Video conferencing

Minutes of Meeting

Members Present

Ir Dr CHAN Hon Fai	Chairperson
Ir Prof LO Man Chi, Irene	Vice-Chairperson
Ir CHAN Chi Ming, Antonio	
Dr CHAN Chun Man, Jones	
Sr CHEUNG Man To, Arthur	(via video conferencing)
Ir CHUNG Chi Ming	
Dr CUNLIFFE David Anthony	(via video conferencing)
Dr HO Koon Sing, Gray	(via video conferencing)
Prof LEE Wing Yan, Vivian	
Prof LIU Hong Bin	
Dr TAM Lai Fan, Gloria	
Ir TANG Ming Sum, Michelle	(via video conferencing)
Prof TO Kai Wang, Kelvin	
Mr WONG Yan Lok, Roger	Director of Water Supplies
Mr HO Ying Kit, Tony	Deputy Secretary for Development (Works) 3
Dr HO Ka Wai, Rita	Head, Non-Communicable Disease Branch, Department of Health (“DH”)
Mr CHAU Siu Hei, Francis	Secretary Team Leader (Water Safety), Development Bureau (“DEVB”) (Stand-in)

Members Absent with Apology

Dr CHUI Ting Fong, May

In Attendance

Mr LO Tsz Lung, Warren	Assistant Secretary (Water Safety) 1, DEVB
Mr KWOK Yau Ting, Kelvin	Project Assistant Secretary (Water Safety) 2, DEVB
Ms YEUNG Man Yan, Didi	Executive Manager (Water Safety), DEVB
Mr CHUNG Wing Kee, Philip	Deputy Director of Water Supplies (Acting)
Mr MA Hon Wing, Wilson	Assistant Director/Development, Water Supplies Department (“WSD”)
Mr CHOY Tak Yip	Chief Chemist, WSD
Ms LAM Lai Hang, Mable	Chief Engineer/Technical Support, WSD
Mr KUNG Ting Wai, Terry	Senior Mechanical Engineer/Material Control and Testing, WSD
Mr YU Chi Wing, Albert	Senior Chemist/Water Quality (Standards and Monitoring), WSD
Mr TSOI Tik Hung, Dick	Chemist/Planning 2, WSD

Action by

1. The Chairperson welcomed Members to the second meeting of the fourth term of the Drinking Water Safety Advisory Committee (“the Committee”). As the meeting would focus on WSD’s regular reporting of drinking water safety matters, he briefly introduced the five core elements of the Action Plan for Enhancing Drinking Water Safety in Hong Kong (“Action Plan”) launched in 2017 for the sake of the new Members of the Committee. In particular, for the Hong Kong Drinking Water Standard (“HKDWS”), he mentioned that the respective guideline values/provisional guideline values in the World Health Organization (WHO)’s Guideline for Drinking-water Quality had been initially adopted in full in 2017, which had subsequently been revised in 2021 taking into account Hong Kong’s local context.

2. At the request of the Chairperson, the Secretary reported that following the endorsement of the proposed revision to HKDWS in March 2024, WSD had consulted the stakeholders on the proposed revisions between 28 March and 12 April 2024, with one minor comment received and subsequently addressed. The Secretary added that the revised HKDWS would be announced following its endorsement by the Secretary for Development.

3. The Secretary informed that no comments on the meeting materials had been received from Members who were absent from this meeting.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting

4. The minutes of the fourteenth meeting were confirmed.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

5. There was no matter arising from last meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Updates on Implementation of Action Plan

6. Mr Dick TSOI, Chemist/Planning (2) and Mr Terry KUNG, Senior Mechanical Engineer/Material Control and Testing of WSD, updated Members on the implementation of the Action Plan.

7. The Chairperson asked if WSD had formulated any proposal to enhance the current systematic flushing protocol for commissioning of new plumbing installations from the perspective of better water conservation. Ms Mable LAM, Chief Engineer/Technical Support of WSD, reported that WSD had taken forward a study to review the flushing protocol, inter alia, to reduce the number of flushing cycles and hence the flushing time and volume of water required. The findings, once available, would be presented to the Committee for deliberation.

WSD

8. In response to a Member's enquiry about the rationale of having a two-tier water sampling for testing of the six metals under the Enhanced Programme (viz. Tier 1 - random day time ("RDT") water sampling and Tier 2 - 30-minute stagnant ("30MS") water sampling), Mr TY CHOY, Chief Chemist of WSD, elaborated that the two-tier sampling protocol had been established based on well-proven

sampling technique and long-term studies by the European Union. While the Tier 1 - RDT sample could measure the average intake of metals, its result could be affected by factors such as prolonged stagnation of water (e.g. a drinking water tap not being used for a long time during a long vacation). When exceedance in certain metal content was found in the Tier 1 sample, the Tier 2 sample would be tested for verification of the exact metal leaching from the material of the plumbing system under a controlled testing condition. A Member also shared that each sampling method had its scope of application and inherent limitations, and a different sampling protocol was adopted in the United States. The Chairperson remarked that the two-tier sampling protocol adopted by WSD had been based on the advice of the International Expert Panel on Drinking Water Safety ("IEP") for testing of the six metal parameters.

WSD

9. Some Members suggested the inclusion of some statistical analysis for the monitoring data obtained under the Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring Programme ("Enhanced Programme") presented by WSD at the meeting so that abnormal trend on the drinking water quality, if any, could be identified for necessary follow up action. In response, Mr CHOY advised that in fact, WSD had such statistical analysis in hand, which could be presented to the Committee in future meetings.

10. On the control of plumbing products, a Member noted that the transitional period for imposing an upper limit on lead content of plumbing products in the proposed legislative amendment would be reduced from 4 years to 2 years. He wondered if the shortened transitional period could be achievable. Ms LAM reported that WSD would soon implement new measures to accept plumbing products that could meet other international or national standards, thereby facilitating early introduction of more plumbing materials that could meet the new lead content requirement, and such measures had gained the support of the relevant trades. In other words, there would be ample time for the market to adapt to new requirement prior to the enactment of the proposed legislative amendment, and hence the abovementioned 2-year transitional period was reasonable. A Member also asked if there would be any long-term plan for lowering the allowable lead content. Ms LAM replied that WSD would follow up with the comment received at the 13th DWSAC meeting to keep monitoring the lead content of plumbing products in the market with a view to gradually bringing in further enhancement in the future.

11. In respect of the surveillance programme on GA products, a Member enquired about the follow-up actions taken on those products that had failed in

WSD's surveillance tests. Mr KUNG reported that there had been 10 failure cases so far. Those failed products had had their GA status removed afterwards and were no longer accepted for use in new plumbing projects according to the established mechanism.

Agenda Item 4: 2023 Annual Report on Drinking Water Quality in Hong Kong

12. Mr Warren LO, Assistant Secretary (Water Safety) 1, and Mr Kelvin KWOK, Project Assistant Secretary (Water Safety) 2 of DEVB, briefed Members about the 2023 Annual Report on Drinking Water Quality in Hong Kong prepared by the Drinking Water Safety Unit ("DWSU") of DEVB, which would be published at DEVB's website after the meeting.

13. The Chairperson appreciated the effort of DWSU in monitoring the performance of WSD through the Unit's audit work. He also enquired about the current operation of the Lowland Raw Water Pumping Station ("LRWPS") by WSD and the associated water safety risks identified in DWSU's earlier Surprise Checks ("SCs"). Mr KWOK explained that LRWPS were used for pumping raw water from the lower part of the water-gathering grounds for subsequent treatment, usually at times of drought. As those lowland areas were often close to residential areas, the raw water thereat was prone to pollution by human activities. As a prevailing measure, when it was required to operate LRWPS, raw water samples would be taken by WSD for testing to ensure its water quality was suitable for subsequent treatment. During an earlier SC, DWSU had identified an opportunity for improvement in the operation of LRWPS by WSD. In case C&G was detected in the raw water sample, DWSU recommended WSD obtain two subsequent satisfactory test results (with samples collected at different time slots) on the absence of C&G prior to commencement of pumping raw water from the lowland areas to guard against the risk of C&G contamination in treated water. As a follow up question, a Member asked whether C&G could be removed during the treatment process. Mr CHOY responded that WSD's water treatment works could achieve a removal efficiency over 99.9% for C&G, and so far, no C&G had been detected in the treated water.

14. After deliberation, Members agreed that the finding and recommendations of DWSU's Third Party Audit ("TPA") and SCs conducted in 2023 were appropriate, and that proper follow-up actions had been taken by WSD in addressing the recommendations.

15. Regarding the Water Safety Plan Subsidy Scheme (“WSPSS”), Members had an in-depth discussion on its coverage, progress, etc. In response to Members’ enquiry, Ms LAM advised that the target participants of WSPSS were residential buildings with rateable values falling below certain prescribed ceilings. She added that subsidies under WSPSS would be disbursed in stages based on the actual progress of work done, such as completion of the formulation of Water Safety Plan for Buildings (“WSPB”), etc. Mr Roger WONG, the Director of Water Supplies, added that more flexibility and streamlining measures would be introduced under WSPSS to assist those needy such as residents of “three-nil buildings”¹ that might be denied access to WSPSS due to the absence of an authorised representative to submit an application. He said that WSD would explore with Home Affairs Department and/or some non-government organisations to facilitate more “three-nil buildings” to join WSPSS. Apart from WSPSS, he also highlighted that WSD had also devised WSPB standard templates for general buildings, schools, elderly homes and hospitals in Hong Kong to promote drinking water safety in such buildings through implementation of WSPB.

16. Without further questions and comments, the Chairperson concluded that the Committee acknowledged WSD’s effort in ensuring drinking water safety and generally agreed with the comments made by DWSU on WSD’s performance in 2023.

Agenda Item 5: Summary on International and Local Water Quality Incidents

17. Mr Dick TSOI gave a brief account of WSD’s review on major international water quality incidents for the period from August 2023 to March 2024. Of the three incidents more relevant to Hong Kong, Mr TSOI deliberated the situation in Hong Kong and Members raised no specific comments.

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

18. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

¹ “Three-nil buildings” generally refer to buildings that neither have an owners’ corporation or any form of residents’ organisation, nor employ a property management company to manage the buildings.