

LCQ17: Loss of mail items

Following is a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mrs Rita Lau, to a question by the Hon Albert Chan in the Legislative Council today (October 22):

Question:

I have recently received a complaint from a member of the public who alleged that the Hongkong Post ("HKP") had lost a mail item he posted, causing him to suffer loss and inconvenience. However, when he requested the post office concerned to account for the loss of the mail item, the staff of the post office said that HKP was not required to bear responsibility for the loss of mail items. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the number of complaints received in each of the past three years about the loss of mail items by HKP;
- (b) whether it has examined the reasons for the loss of mail items by HKP; if it has, of the results; and
- (c) whether HKP will take measures to avoid losing mail items; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) Over the past three years, the Post Office received 144, 699 and 124 complaints each year about loss of mail items. With an average mail volume of 1.4 billion items handled each year, the ratio of lost items was less than one in a million.

(b) Past experience of the Post Office shows that the main reason for unsuccessful delivery is incomplete or incorrect addresses provided by senders. In addition, loss of mail items may arise from worn-out or damaged letterboxes, and mail items may also be accidentally destroyed or may have gone astray at overseas destinations.

(c) To tackle the above problems, the Post Office has taken various measures to reduce loss of mail items.

To minimise the risks of mail loss arising from the design and conditions of letterboxes, the Post Office has stipulated in its guidelines to postmen that mail items delivered to old buildings have to be inserted into the letterboxes completely. The Post Office has also called upon the public to use larger and lockable letterboxes and clear their letterboxes regularly to avoid mail overflow which may invite theft. In case of oversized mail items that cannot be inserted into letterboxes, the Post Office will inform the recipients to collect the items at post offices.

Separately, the Post Office has often promoted the importance and format of correct mail addresses to the public with a view to reducing misdelivery caused by incomplete addresses.

As there are no detailed delivery records for non-registered mail items, the Post Office will endeavour to trace the item concerned if the sender can provide relevant particulars, such as the time and place of posting as well as the delivery address. As for registered mail items or other items with certificates of posting, the Post Office can track down the item concerned according to the formal records, such as the barcode or the acknowledgement of receipt signed by the recipient.

Ends/Wednesday, October 22, 2008