

Applications for over 16 000 new niches at Wo Hop Shek, Cape Collinson-San Ha and Shek Mun Columbariums to open from May 19

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (May 14) that more than 16 000 new extendable niches at Wo Hop Shek Columbarium in Fanling, Cape Collinson-San Ha Columbarium in Eastern District and Shek Mun Columbarium in Sha Tin will be open for applications from May 19 to June 18.

An FEHD spokesman said, "Under the new round of niche allocation exercise, the FEHD will allocate a total of 16 150 extendable niches, including 4 000 standard niches and 50 large niches at Wo Hop Shek Columbarium Phase VI, 6 000 standard niches and 50 large niches at Cape Collinson-San Ha Columbarium, as well as 6 000 standard niches and 50 large niches at Shek Mun Columbarium. The initial ash interment period for the allocated public niches is 20 years and can be extended at 10-year intervals thereafter. Upon expiry of the interment period, the persons concerned may continue to use the allocated niche provided that he/she extends the interment period and pays the prevailing prescribed fee."

Taking into account the views of residents in the vicinity, Shek Mun Columbarium and Garden of Remembrance will be a smoke-free columbarium project, i.e. the columbarium will not provide any facilities for burning joss sticks and offerings. Burning of joss sticks and incense offerings will be banned completely within the columbarium area, including all floors and common areas.

Applicants should only file one application form to apply for either a large or standard niche for the same deceased person. When applying for a large niche, applicants have to fill in the particulars of at least three deceased people. For a standard niche, applicants must fill in at least one deceased person's particulars.

The spokesman said, "The FEHD will allocate niches by open drawing of lots and computer random balloting, which is expected to be held in the third quarter of this year, with the exact date to be announced later. After the drawing of lots and computer random balloting, the FEHD will inform applicants of the results of their applications and provide serial numbers of the designated niches allocated to successful applicants. The niches will not be chosen by applicants themselves."

Starting from May 19, members of the public can apply online or download the application form from the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk) or the Platform for Cemeteries and Crematoria Services (app.fehd.gov.hk/ccsp). They can also obtain the application form in person from the Hong Kong or Kowloon

Cemeteries and Crematoria Office, District Environmental Hygiene Offices of the FEHD, or Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of the Home Affairs Department, or by fax via hotline 2841 9111.

The spokesman advises applicants to submit their applications online to avoid any postal delay. Upon submission, applicants will promptly receive an acknowledgement receipt with a case number, thus facilitating the follow-up of the application in the future. If the applicant is the same person who has applied for cremation service for the deceased, it is more convenient to submit the application online by exempting the need to attach copies of the required documents and having the application online granted automatically. Successful applicants can pay the prescribed fees to complete the required niche allocation formalities through the "Single Portal with Token for Online Services and Payment" on the Platform for Cemeteries and Crematoria Services, without visiting the Public Niche Allocation Office in person. If not submitting their application online, applicants shall submit the completed application form together with copies of the required documents by fax (2333 1716), by email (apply_newniche@fehd.gov.hk), by post or in person to the Hong Kong or Kowloon Cemeteries and Crematoria Offices within the application period.

The School of Life Event Series – Talk on After-death Arrangements will be held at 10.30am on May 24 (Saturday) at Yuen Chau Kok Community Hall (No. 35 Ngan Shing Street, Sha Tin, New Territories) to provide the public with more information on the coming public niche allocation, green burial facilities/services and regulation of private columbaria. The talk is free of charge and no prior registration is required.

For details of the arrangements of the niche allocation exercise and the information seminar, please visit the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk).