

# Housing Authority adjusts its public services

The following press release is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

To maintain social distancing, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) announced today (April 17) that the following public service arrangements will be implemented on all working days starting from April 20 (Monday) until further notice:

- All Estate Management Offices (EMOs) of public housing estates will be open from 10am to 4pm on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday to provide limited general management services for public housing estates and handle cases with prior appointments. For enquiries outside the opening hours, residents may call the contact telephone numbers provided by the respective EMOs, and staff will render assistance as much as practicable. EMOs' shroff offices will be closed. Residents can pay rent at more than 1 000 locations such as convenience stores and supermarkets. They may also make payments via the Payment by Phone Service. For details, please browse the following website: [www.housingauthority.gov.hk/en/public-housing/rent-related-matters/rent-payment-methods/index.html](http://www.housingauthority.gov.hk/en/public-housing/rent-related-matters/rent-payment-methods/index.html);
- The following subsidised housing offices will provide limited services from 10am to 4pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays:
  - The White Form Secondary Market Scheme Unit in the Lok Fu Customer Service Centre;
  - The Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) Secondary Market Scheme Unit in Lung Cheung Office Block, Wong Tai Sin; and
  - The Home Assistance Loan Unit in Lung Cheung Office Block, Wong Tai Sin;
- The HOS Sales Unit in the Lok Fu Customer Service Centre and the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme Sales Unit in Kwun Tong will continue to be open only for applicants with prior appointments;
- The Public Rental Housing (PRH) application office in the Lok Fu Customer Service Centre will be open from 8am to 4pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays to provide limited services in relation to matters involving PRH applications;
- The Clearance Housing Office and the Redevelopment Sub-section offices (Pak Tin and Mei Tung) will be open from 10am to 4pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays to provide limited services in relation to matters involving clearance housing or redevelopment; and

- The Shroff Office on the Ground Floor of the HA Headquarters will be open from 10am to 12.30pm and from 2pm to 4pm on Mondays to Fridays to provide limited services. All payment collection services (including premium payments by Subsidised Sale Flats Scheme owners to enable them to complete transactions of their flats) with the exception of rental payment collection will be in operation.

In addition, due to the above work arrangements, the HA may not be able to reply to public enquiries, requests or complaints in a timely manner.

For enquiries, please call the HA hotline on 2712 2712.

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## **Government approves five more production lines under Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme**

The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau announced today (April 17) that it has approved the following five applications under the Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme:

1. Sinopharm Tech Medical Supplies Limited has been approved for obtaining subsidy for one production line, with April 10 as the target commencement date for supplying certified masks to the Government (the target commencement date) as estimated in its application. It is expected to supply an average of 2 million masks every month to the Government and to produce a further 1 million masks on average every month for the local market. The production line may receive a subsidy of up to \$3 million.
2. Hong Kong Lion Production Company Limited has been approved for obtaining subsidy for one production line, with April 15 as the target commencement date as estimated in its application. It is expected to supply an average of 550 000 masks every month to the Government. The production line may receive a subsidy of up to \$2 million.
3. HKer Medical Supplies Limited has been approved for obtaining subsidy for one production line, with April 16 as the target commencement date as estimated in its application. It is expected to supply an average of 2 million masks every month to the Government and to produce a further 1.6 million masks on average every month for the local market. The production line may receive a subsidy of up to \$3 million.

4. Action Medical Sundries Limited has been approved for obtaining subsidy for one production line, with April 16 as the target commencement date as estimated in its application. It is expected to supply an average of 2 million masks every month to the Government and to produce a further 1 million masks on average every month for the local market. The production line may receive a subsidy of up to \$3 million.
5. SDL Skin (Asia) Limited has been approved for obtaining subsidy for one production line, with April 16 as the target commencement date as estimated in its application. It is expected to supply an average of 1.2 million masks every month to the Government. The production line may receive a subsidy of up to \$2 million.

The target commencement date as estimated by an applicant in its application is one of the approval criteria. If an approved applicant cannot supply certified masks to the Government by the target commencement date, it may apply for extension of not more than one month. Any extension beyond one month without exceptional reasons and full justifications would result in revocation of the subsidy.

After approval in principle is given, the Government will sign an agreement with the approved applicant and will disburse subsidy funds to the approved applicant in instalments pursuant to the terms of the agreement. The actual subsidy amount for each production line under the Scheme is contingent upon the actual expenditure for production equipment and setting up the venue and clean room facilities as well as testing and standards compliance, and will be finalised when the expenditure is confirmed.

An approved applicant must fulfil the terms of the agreement, including securing the relevant certification for the masks produced, before the Government begins purchasing masks from it.

The Government launched the Scheme under the Anti-epidemic Fund to facilitate local production of masks as soon as possible to help address the imminent shortage as well as to build up stock.

The Scheme will provide subsidies to a maximum of 20 local production lines. Thus far, 13 production lines have been approved under the Scheme, and there is a subsidy quota of seven production lines remaining. The Hong Kong Productivity Council has confirmed that there remain 26 applications (involving 33 production lines) which meet all the eligibility criteria of the Scheme, and the Government will process them as soon as possible.

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# Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulation 2020 and Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicles) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2020 gazetted

The Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulation 2020 and the Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicles) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2020 were gazetted today (April 17).

The relevant amendment regulations seek to relax the vehicle length and maximum gross weight restriction of light buses to 7.5 metres and 8.5 tonnes, and amend some technical requirements in respect of the destination indicator and the fare card of public light buses.

A spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau said, "It is the Government's policy objective to promote green and barrier-free transport. While taking forward the above initiatives, we notice that the vehicle lengths and weights of electric light bus models and models with barrier-free facilities in the market often exceed the current legal requirements of 7 metres and 5.5 tonnes.

"After reviewing, we consider the vehicle length and maximum gross weight restriction of light buses should be relaxed to allow more choices for the trade while accommodating the development needs of the industry. At the same time, we would like to take the opportunity to examine the regulations concerning other equipment on public light buses, and propose to make certain amendments, including updating the requirements on the destination indicator and the fare card, in order to reflect the flexible mode of operation of the public light bus trade and the latest technological developments, thus ensuring that the current law will be able to accommodate the actual needs of society and the trade."

The relevant amendment regulations will be submitted to the Legislative Council on April 22 for negative vetting procedures. If the amendment regulations are passed by the Legislative Council, the new requirements will be effective from July 5 this year. The Transport Department will also specify by notice in the Gazette the updated design and construction requirements of the destination indicator and the fare card of public light buses. Prior to the amendment regulations taking effect, the Transport Department will enhance the publicity work to ensure the smooth implementation of the new requirements and due compliance by the trade.

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## Appointment of new member to Advisory Committee on Gifted Education

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (April 17) announced the appointment of Professor Chui Yat-hung as a member to the Advisory Committee on Gifted Education (ACGE). His appointment will take effect today and end on March 31, 2021.

The ACGE was set up in April 2017 to advise the Secretary for Education on the use and management of the Gifted Education Fund, long-term development of gifted education in Hong Kong and measures and initiatives for promoting gifted education.

With Professor Chui Yat-hung's dedication to assisting students in realising their further studies and career aspirations, and his rich experience in public service, the EDB welcomes Professor Chui to provide more invaluable advice to the Government on the development of gifted education.

The full list of membership of the ACGE from April 17, 2020, to March 31, 2021, is as follows:

### Chairman

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Dr Pang Yiu-kai

### Non-official members

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Professor Cheng Shuk-han  
Dr John Tan Kang  
Sister Anita Kwok Ming-ying  
Ms Sonia Cheng Chi-man  
Dr Allen Fung Yuk-lun  
Ms Carrie Leung Ka-lai  
Ms Cecilia Lee Sau-wai  
Ms Ada Li Yuen-yung  
Mr Cheng Ho-wai  
Professor Chui Yat-hung

### Ex-officio members

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Permanent Secretary for Education  
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)  
Chairman, Board of Directors of the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education  
Chairperson, Committee on Gifted Education of the Curriculum Development Council

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## Hong Kong Customs detects first case of using imported gin from overseas to disguise as locally-distilled gin for sale (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (April 15) conducted an enforcement operation in Tsuen Wan and detected the first case ever of using imported gin from overseas to disguise as locally-distilled gin for sale. During the operation, a total of 3 046 bottles of gin suspected to be involved with the case, a batch of labels and a set of still were seized with an estimated market value of about \$1.5 million in total.

Customs officers earlier noticed the sale of gin claimed as locally-distilled on a social media platform by a company claimed as a liquor manufacturing factory. A batch of 1 557 bottles of gin without any labels was also found imported from New Zealand by the company on April 12. The batch of gin was seized by the Customs for investigation during clearance.

After follow-up investigation, Customs yesterday conducted a search at the company's factory unit in Tsuen Wan where a further seizure, including 1 325 bottles of gin without labels, seven bottles bearing a label with printed words of "Distilled and Bottled", a batch of unused labels with the same printed words and a set of still suspected to be used for distilling or processing spirits, was made.

Investigation revealed that the company attempted to use imported gin from overseas to disguise as locally-distilled gin for sale. During the operation, a 40-year-old male director and a 29-year-old woman suspected to be in connection with the case were arrested.

Customs also recalled 157 bottles of the gin concerned from the distributor.

The total estimated market value of the gin seized in the case is about \$1.29 million. They have been passed to the Government Laboratory for testing. Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO), any person who supplies goods with a false trade description in the course of trade or business, or is in possession of any goods for sale with a false trade description, commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO), the maximum penalty upon conviction for illegal possession of still is a fine of \$1 million and

imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TD0 or DC0 to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).

