

EMSD announces latest sampling results for legionella at fresh water cooling towers

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (May 8) announced that the department tested 19 water samples collected from cooling towers in 15 buildings in its routine inspections in April this year. None of them was detected to have a total legionella count at or above the upper threshold, which is 1 000 colony-forming units per millilitre. The latest statistics are set out in Annex 1.

The EMSD also announced the locations of buildings which were served with nuisance notices during the preceding three-month period as the total legionella count was found in the fresh water cooling towers to be equal to or above the upper threshold. Details can be found in Annex 2. The EMSD publishes the latest statistics of the above information on a half-monthly basis on its website

(www.emsd.gov.hk/en/other_regulatory_services/cooling_towers/water_sampling/index.html).

The EMSD reminds the owners of fresh water cooling towers that they have the responsibility to design, operate and maintain cooling towers properly. They should arrange regular inspections, timely maintenance and periodic testing of the water quality in their cooling towers in accordance with the Code of Practice for Fresh Water Cooling Towers issued by the department to prevent the proliferation of legionella.

Red flag hoisted at Kiu Tsui Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 8) that the Environmental Protection Department has classified the water quality at Kiu Tsui Beach in Sai Kung District as Grade 4, which means the beach is not suitable for swimming. The red flag has been hoisted. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach until further notice.

LCQ8: Outsourcing of estate management services of PRH estates

Following is a question by Hon Michael Tien and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

Currently, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has outsourced the estate management of about 60 per cent of public rental housing (PRH) estates to property management companies (PMCs). Some residents of PRH estates have relayed that some new PRH estates, which are managed by PMCs, do not have a sufficient number of security guards on duty after a lapse of more than one year since the intake of residents, and that the security guards employed by such PMCs have not properly followed up complaints about strangers entering the estates to promote products from door to door, making them very worried about their personal safety. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) regarding PMCs' failure to meet the manpower requirements and service standards for estate management stipulated in the service contracts, of the measures HA will take to render PMCs meeting the contractual requirements as soon as possible; and

(2) whether HA will review the existing mechanism for monitoring the performance of PMCs; if so, of the timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to the Hon Michael Tien's question is as follows:

It is stipulated in the contracts for property management services (PSCs) outsourced by Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) that property services agents (PSAs) should properly discharge their property management duties. In order to assess their overall performance, HA carries out regular inspections and has established a scoring system under which estate staff, Estate Management Advisory Committees and randomly selected households from individual housing estates will assess the performance of their respective PSAs on a quarterly basis. The scores attained by PSAs will affect their contract extension and tender opportunities. HA will request those PSAs with unsatisfactory performance to make improvements. If there is no improvement, the PSAs with unsatisfactory performance will be subject to regulatory actions as decided by the Housing Department's Contractors Review Committee, which may include restriction or suspension from tendering, removal from HA's

Lists of Contractors, etc.

HA will take corresponding follow-up actions against PSAs who fail to provide the necessary manpower required under the contracts, such as reducing the monthly service charges to those PSAs who fail to provide a sufficient number of security guards as required under the contracts, and reflecting the deficiency in their monthly performance assessment scores. HA will, where necessary, meet with the management of such PSAs, urging them to resolve the issues of manpower shortage and failure to meet the service requirements as soon as possible.

HA keeps in view the arrangements and monitoring mechanism related to outsourced property management services from time to time. The Government has recently completed a review on its outsourcing system, and has introduced new measures to strengthen the protection of non-skilled workers employed by Government service contractors in the aspects of reasonable remuneration and labour rights. HA has adopted the Government's enhanced measures. Regarding the tender evaluation mechanism for PSCs, HA has aligned with the Government's new measures and adjusted the technical weighting to 50 per cent. HA will also follow the Government's measures by adjusting the weighting of the wages of non-skilled workers in service contracts to 25 per cent of the total technical marks so as to encourage PSAs to offer more reasonable remuneration to their workers, and strengthen the regulatory requirements (Note 1) on occupational safety and health. We believe that these measures will help enhance the manpower arrangements and service quality of PSAs. HA will continue to keep under review its outsourcing arrangements, with a view to ensuring reasonable service quality.

Note 1: Under the current mechanism, a tenderer with a conviction record of any specified offences (i.e. those under the Employment Ordinance (Cap 57); the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (Cap 282); Section 17I(1), Section 38A(4) and Section 41 of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap 115); Section 89 of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance (Cap 221); and Section 7, 7A and 43E of the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Ordinance (Cap 485)) will be debarred from tendering for HA's service contracts for a maximum of five years (counting from the date of conviction), and the service contractor will also be removed from the respective HA List. In line with the Government's new measures, HA will expand the list of such offences to cover those under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Cap 509) and the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Cap 59); and Section 7AA, Section 43B(3A) and Section 43BA(5) of the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Ordinance (Cap 485).

Lifesaving services at Cafeteria New

Beach resume

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department has announced that the lifesaving services at Cafeteria New Beach in Tuen Mun District resumed today (May 8). The lifesaving services at the beach were suspended earlier due to an insufficient number of lifeguards on duty.

SFST attends UK-HK Financial Dialogue in London 2019 (with photos)

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, started his visit to London, the United Kingdom (UK) yesterday (May 7, London time), leading a delegation to attend the UK-Hong Kong Financial Dialogue 2019 (Dialogue) to foster closer financial collaboration between the two places.

The visiting delegation comprises representatives from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Securities and Futures Commission and the Insurance Authority as well as industry leaders from the banking, financial technology (fintech) and asset management sectors.

Speaking at the opening of "London-Hong Kong Financial Services Forum" of the Dialogue, Mr Lau was pleased to see enhanced engagement on both sides and welcomed exchange of thoughts on a wide range of areas of possible collaboration.

He said Hong Kong, being the most international city in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, is well positioned to build on its role as an international financial centre to become a gateway city to the Greater Bay Area for British and international financial services firms.

He added that the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area further recognised and supported Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre, a global offshore Renminbi business hub, an international asset management centre and a risk management centre. With enhanced interconnectivity, demand for cross-boundary financial services would increase and hence opportunities for the industry. He welcomed British

firms to continue to make use of Hong Kong's financial strengths to tap into the huge Greater Bay Area market.

Earlier in the day before the Dialogue started, Mr Lau met with the UK Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Mr John Glen, where he highlighted the vast opportunities brought about by strengthened co-operation between the two sides in newer developments, including green finance, fintech, the Belt and Road Initiative and the Greater Bay Area.

Mr Lau also addressed the Hong Kong Association at a luncheon, during which he updated the participants on the latest financial developments in Hong Kong.

In the afternoon, Mr Lau visited a London-based fintech company, Ebury, to see how the company offers finance solutions to help enterprises expand their businesses. Being one of the most influential technology companies in the field of trade finance and foreign exchange risk management, Ebury established an office in Hong Kong last year.

Mr Lau then paid a courtesy call on the Acting Chinese Ambassador to the UK, Ms Chen Wen. He took the opportunity to brief her on Hong Kong's latest developments and thank her for supporting and offering assistance to the Hong Kong people.

In the evening, Mr Lau attended a reception for the UK-Hong Kong Financial Dialogue 2019 hosted by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London.

Mr Lau will take part in the "UK-Hong Kong Financial Services Government Dialogue" today (May 8, London time). He will also meet with the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Philip Hammond, and visit a fintech company.



