

[Electoral Legislation \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Bill 2019 gazetted today](#)

The Electoral Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2019 was published in the Gazette today (March 1). The Bill amends various pieces of electoral legislation to introduce necessary technical legislative amendments for the 2020 Legislative Council (LegCo) General Election and other public elections.

"To improve the electoral arrangements, we propose to introduce certain amendments through the Electoral Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2019, including technical amendments concerning the electorate of the functional constituencies, arrangements in the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance (Cap. 554), as well as various electoral procedures," a Government spokesman said.

"We plan to introduce the Bill into the LegCo for first and second readings on March 20, 2019. We hope that the Bill can be passed in mid 2019, so that the relevant new measures can be implemented in time for the 2019 District Council Ordinary Election," the spokesman added.

[Grading of beach water quality released](#)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (March 1) released the latest grading of water quality of nine gazetted beaches that are open for swimming, including four that are open to swimmers all year round and five others that are open for swimming since March 1.

Eight beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1) and one as Fair (Grade 2).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Repulse Bay Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach	Silver Mine Bay Beach
Golden Beach	Stanley Main Beach

Grade 2 beach is:

Silverstrand Beach

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, an EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. Latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's websites on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Refinements to Legislative Framework of Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information in Tax Matters to come into force

The Inland Revenue (Amendment) (No. 2) Ordinance 2019 (Amendment Ordinance) is gazetted today (March 1). The legislative framework of automatic exchange of financial account information in tax matters (AEOI) under the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112) (IRO) will be refined with effect from January 1, 2020 for better aligning the relevant provisions with the requirements promulgated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

"Hong Kong has all along been committed to complying with the international standards on tax co-operation, and the AEOI legislative framework was put in place in June 2016," a Government spokesman said.

The Amendment Ordinance requires Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes, Occupational Retirement Schemes registered under the Occupational Retirement Schemes Ordinance (Cap. 426), pooling agreements, approved pooled investment funds and credit unions to comply with the due diligence and reporting obligations relating to AEOI starting from 2020. If members of the institutions concerned are tax residents of the reportable jurisdictions, such institutions will need to report in 2021 for the first time to the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) the financial account information of the relevant members, covering the year 2020, for transmission to the relevant tax authorities.

Further, Hong Kong's network for tax information exchange has been expanded since the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters came into force in Hong Kong on September 1, 2018. The Amendment Ordinance increases the number of reportable jurisdictions under the IRO from the current 75 to 126.

The Amendment Ordinance has also introduced technical refinements to certain AEOI-related provisions of the IRO.

The IRD will revise the Guidance for Financial Institutions having regard to the Amendment Ordinance. The public can obtain more information on AEOI via the IRD's webpage (www.ird.gov.hk/eng/tax/dta_aeoi.htm).

AEOI requires financial institutions to identify financial accounts held by tax residents of reportable jurisdictions, and to collect the relevant financial account information for reporting to the tax authority and subsequent exchange with other relevant jurisdictions. Hong Kong conducted the first round of AEOI with the relevant jurisdictions in 2018.

Red flags hoisted at some beaches

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 (March 1) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

WHETO hosts events in Changsha and Wuhan to celebrate Chinese New Year (with photos)

The Hunan Liaison Unit (HNLU) of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Wuhan (WHETO) and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO) in Hunan jointly held the "2019 Forum between the Hunan Provincial Government and

Representatives of Hong Kong Enterprises" on February 26 in Changsha, providing an opportunity for Hong Kong enterprises in Hunan and government departments to communicate directly and discuss issues relating to the business environment in Hunan, as well as to find new development opportunities. The Director of WHETO, Mr Vincent Fung; the Vice Governor of Hunan Province, Mr He Baoxiang; the Director of the HKMAO in Hunan, Mr Xu Zhengxian, and around 20 representatives from various provincial/municipal departments including the Development and Reform Commission of Hunan Province, the China Hunan Provincial Science and Technology Department, the Department of Commerce of Hunan Province, the Hunan Local Taxation Bureau, the Administration for Market Regulation of Hunan Province, the Changsha Customs and the HKMAO of Changsha Municipal People's Government attended the Forum.

This marked the third consecutive year that the Forum had been held. This year, 20 representatives from major Hong Kong-funded enterprises and chambers of commerce attended the Forum and exchanged views on the above issues with officials from various government departments.

The same evening, the HNLU, the HKMAO in Hunan and the Changsha Municipal People's Government jointly held the "Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of China's Reform and Opening Up cum Hunan-Hong Kong Spring Reception", which was attended by some 300 Hong Kong people working, living and studying in Hunan, as well as other guests.

Today (February 28) in Wuhan, the WHETO, the Representative Office in Wuhan of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) and the Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce in China – Wuhan (HKCCC-WH) jointly held the "Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of China's Reform and Opening Up cum Spring Reception for Hong Kong Residents in Hubei Province 2019". Around 200 guests including Mr Fung; the Deputy Director General of the HKMAO in Hubei, Mr Zhang Lianghua; the Deputy Director General of the HKMAO in Wuhan, Mr Yu Feng; the President of the HKCCC-WH, Mr Tse Chun-ming; the Central China Director of the HKTDC, Mr Zhou Yilei, and Hong Kong people doing business, working and studying in Hubei attended the event.

Speaking at the event, Mr Fung, said that the year 2018/19 had special meaning as it marked the 40th anniversary China's reform and opening up; also the Central Government introduced various facilitation measures for Hong Kong people, such as eligible Hong Kong people residing in the Mainland can now apply for a Home Residence Permit; and it is also a fruitful year for infrastructural development in Hong Kong, such as the opening of the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. Looking forward, he said that there is further good news for Hong Kong such as the gradual development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the 2019-20 Budget initiatives which will benefit the public. The WHETO will continue to participate in and organise various activities to deepen exchanges and co-operation between Hong Kong and Hubei, he added.

During the receptions in Changsha and Wuhan, Mr Fung, spoke with

representatives of the respective provincial and municipal governments of Hunan and Hubei. He also talked with Hong Kong people who live, study and operate businesses in Hunan and Hubei to learn more about their experiences there and the latest developments in these provinces.



