

Government to reduce telecommunications licence fees and introduce new fee component

The Telecommunications (Carrier Licences) (Amendment) Regulation 2018 was published in the Gazette today (November 23). The amendment regulation seeks to reduce the customer connection fee of unified carrier licences (UCL) from \$700 to \$500 for each 100 customer connections and to introduce a new Wireless Internet of Things (WIoT) device fee of \$200 for each 100 WIoT devices under UCL, both to take effect from January 31, 2019.

"Taking into account the financial performance of the Office of the Communications Authority Trading Fund (OFCATF) in the coming years, we consider that there is room for downward adjustment of the customer connection fee under UCL. The licence fee reduction is in line with the cost recovery principle," a spokesman for the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau said.

"Aligned with the relevant fee under the WIoT licence introduced in December 2017, the new WIoT device fee is set at a much reduced level than that of the customer connection fee. This will bring substantial savings to mobile network operators offering WIoT services and facilitate the development of WIoT services in Hong Kong," the spokesman added.

The amendment regulation will be tabled in the Legislative Council for negative vetting on November 28, 2018.

Subject to the passage of the amendment regulation, the Communications Authority will also reduce the mobile station fee of four other types of licences, namely the public radiocommunications service licence for public radio paging services, the services-based operator licence (Class 3) for mobile virtual network operators, the mobile radio system mobile station licence and the private mobile radio system licence, with effect from January 31, 2019.

Telecommunications licence fees are collected by the OFCATF to recover the costs incurred in the provision of service by the OFCATF.

Ferry Services (Amendment) Ordinance 2018 comes into effect

The Transport Department (TD) announced that the Ferry Services

(Amendment) Ordinance 2018 became effective today (November 23).

A spokesman for the TD said that ferry service licences are granted by the Commissioner for Transport, in accordance with section 28 of the Ferry Services Ordinance (Ordinance) (Cap 104), to the licensees for the operations of ferry services. According to section 29 of the amended Ordinance, licences, whether newly granted or extended, may be granted for a maximum period of five years on each occasion, and the aggregate licence period (i.e. including all extended period(s)) shall not exceed 10 years.

The relaxation of the cap on the licence period for newly granted licences and extended licences on each occasion, from the original three years to five years, aims at encouraging and facilitating ferry operators to make longer term planning and investment with a view to improving the financial viability of ferry services and service quality.

The spokesman added that regarding applications for extension of current licences, licensees may consider whether to make application for a longer licence period while their licences are in force. For applications for licence extension submitted to the TD before the effective date (i.e. November 23, 2018) of the amended Ordinance, the licensees concerned may consider whether to maintain the licence periods of their original applications or to make applications to the TD for revising their applications for a longer licence period. However, it should be noted that the aggregate licence period (i.e. including all extended period(s)) shall not exceed 10 years. The TD will handle the applications according to the established procedures.

Proposed footbridge and cycle bridge across Wang Tong River in Mui Wo gazetted

The Government gazetted today (November 23) the proposed construction of a footbridge and a cycle bridge across Wang Tong River in Mui Wo to avoid conflict between pedestrians and cyclists and enhance road safety.

Details of the proposal are set out in the Annex. The plan and the scheme of the works are available for public inspection at the following government offices during office hours:

Central and Western Home Affairs Enquiry Centre,
G/F, Harbour Building,
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Islands District Office,
20/F, Harbour Building,
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Islands Home Affairs Enquiry Centre (Mui Wo),
G/F, Mui Wo Government Offices,
2 Ngan Kwong Wan Road, Mui Wo, Lantau Island

District Lands Office, Islands,
19/F, Harbour Building,
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

The gazette notice, scheme, plan and location plan will be available at www.thb.gov.hk/eng/psp/publications/transport/gazette/gazette.htm.

Any person who wishes to object to the works or the use, or both, is required to address to the Secretary for Transport and Housing an objection in writing, which can be submitted via the following means:

- By post or by hand to the Transport and Housing Bureau's drop-in box No. 6 located at the entrance on 2/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong. The box is available for use between 8am and 7pm from Monday to Friday (except public holidays);
- By fax to 2868 4643; or
- By email to gazettethb@thb.gov.hk.

A notice of objection should describe the objector's interest and the manner in which he or she alleges that he or she will be affected by the works or the use. Objectors are requested to provide contact details to facilitate communication. A notice of objection should be delivered to the Secretary for Transport and Housing not later than January 22, 2019.

Review of objections to 2018-19 rateable values completed

The Rating and Valuation Department has completed its review of more than 40,700 objections received from March 19 to May 31 in regard to the new rateable values in the Valuation List and Government Rent Roll. Notices of Decision (Form R22A) in respect of these objections have been issued in phases by the department.

A spokesman for the department today (November 23) said that anyone who lodged an objection during this period and who had not yet received a Notice of Decision should contact the department's Customer Service Officer, Mrs Leung Tang Siu-kuen, on 2150 8902.

The spokesman said that any alterations in rateable values as a result of the objections would take effect retrospectively from April 1 this year and adjustments to the amount of rates and Government rent payable would be made in subsequent demand notes.

Nomination of candidates for 2019 Rural Ordinary Election to end today

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) had received a total of 1 858 nomination forms for the 2019 Rural Ordinary Election when the period for nomination of candidates ended at 5pm today (November 22). They comprise 1 016 nominations for Indigenous Inhabitant Representative elections, 759 nominations for Resident Representative elections, and 83 nominations for Kaifong Representative Election.

A spokesman for the HAD said that the name list of nominated candidates would be uploaded onto the Rural Representative Election website (www.had.gov.hk/rre) for public inspection. After vetting and verifying the eligibility of the candidates, the Returning Officers will publish a gazette notice on valid nominations on December 6.

The Village Representative (including Indigenous Inhabitant Representative and Resident Representative) Election will be conducted on two consecutive Sundays on January 6 and 13, 2019, while the Kaifong Representative Election for Market Towns will be held on January 20, 2019 (Sunday). There are 195 476 and 9 542 registered electors in total for the Village Representative Election and the Kaifong Representative Election respectively.

The Elections involve a total of 709 villages and two market towns (i.e. Cheung Chau and Peng Chau) listed in the schedules of the Rural Representative Election Ordinance (Chapter 576). There are 1 484 Village Representative seats in total, including 695 Resident Representative seats and 789 Indigenous Inhabitant Representative seats. In addition, there are 39 and 17 Kaifong Representative seats for Cheung Chau and Peng Chau respectively.