

Registration and nomination invited for Labour Advisory Board Election of Employee Representatives

The Labour Department is inviting employee unions registered under the Trade Unions Ordinance (TUO) to register as electors, appoint authorised representatives to vote and nominate candidates for the coming 2019-20 Labour Advisory Board (LAB) Election of Employee Representatives.

"Registration as electors, appointment of authorised representatives and nomination of candidates start today (September 17) and will close on October 9, 2018 (Tuesday)," a spokesperson for the department said.

The current term of the LAB will expire on December 31 this year. An election of five employee representatives to the LAB for its next two-year tenure, ending December 31, 2020, will be held at Mei Foo Community Hall, 1/F, Mei Foo Government Complex, on November 10 (Saturday) this year. Authorised representatives may cast their votes at that polling station between 11am and 4pm.

All employee unions registered under the TUO on or before today are eligible to nominate candidates to run for the election. Unions that have registered as electors in LAB elections held in 2006 or thereafter need not re-register as electors but have to appoint authorised representatives in order to vote in the election.

"We have sent out today related forms and copies of the rules and procedures for the election to all employee unions with valid registration in the Labour Department's register of trade unions," the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, the department has invited five employer associations to nominate one representative each to sit for the next tenure of the LAB as employer representatives. These associations are the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, the Employers' Federation of Hong Kong, the Federation of Hong Kong Industries and the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce.

Enquiries on matters relating to the election can be made at 2852 4024.

The LAB is a tripartite consultative body comprising representatives of employees and employers to advise the Commissioner for Labour on labour matters.

Latest situation on postal services

Hongkong Post today (September 17) announced that all post offices are open for service. The services of Mobile Post Offices 1 and 2 remain normal, except for individual call points that are affected due to road conditions.

As road transport has not returned to normal yet, Hongkong Post will provide mail delivery services based on actual circumstances. Outbound airmail services are subject to delay due to flight adjustments. Hongkong Post will resume postal services as far as the actual local circumstances allow. For enquiries, please contact Hongkong Post's General Enquiry Hotline on 2921 2222.

Fung Kam Street Sports Centre and Praya Street Sports Centre reopened

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (September 17) that Fung Kam Street Sports Centre in Yuen Long District and Praya Street Sports Centre in Islands District have been reopened.

The sports centres were temporarily closed earlier on for use as temporary shelters operated by District Offices of the Home Affairs Department.

The Launch of Faster Payment System

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced the launch of the Faster Payment System (FPS) today (September 17).

The FPS is one of the seven initiatives announced by the HKMA in September 2017 for preparing Hong Kong to move into a new era of Smart Banking. The FPS operates on a round-the-clock basis and connects banks and stored-value facility (SVF) operators on the same platform. It enables the public to transfer funds anytime, anywhere, across different banks or SVFs with funds available almost immediately. Fund transfer will become very user-friendly with the use of mobile number or email address as account proxy for

the payee. In addition to the Hong Kong Dollar (HKD), the FPS also supports Renminbi (RMB) payments.

The Chief Executive of the HKMA, Mr Norman Chan, said, "The FPS is a unique platform as it supports instant payments in the HKD and the RMB with the use of mobile phone numbers, email addresses or Quick Response codes (QR code), and achieves full connectivity among banks and SVF accounts. It makes retail fund transfers and payments much quicker and easier. The launch of the FPS signifies the payment system, which forms the core part of the Hong Kong's financial infrastructure, will enter into a new era. While it will bring new opportunities to the retail payment industry, it will also promote innovation in financial technology, providing greater convenience and new experience to the public."

Starting from today, the public can make use of the mobile app of participating banks and SVFs to register their mobile phone number or email address with the FPS as an account proxy for receiving funds. And from September 30, the public can make transfers or receive funds using the FPS. Currently, a total of 21 banks (including most retail banks) and 10 SVFs in Hong Kong have participated in the system to provide FPS services for their customers at launch (see Annex for the list).

Similar to the HKD Clearing House Automated Transfer System (CHATS) and RMB CHATS, the HKD FPS and RMB FPS are subject to the HKMA's oversight under the Payment Systems and Stored Value Facilities Ordinance (PSSVFO). The PSSVFO also provides statutory backing to the finality of settlement for transactions made through the HKD FPS and RMB FPS by protecting the settlement finality from insolvency laws or any other laws.

In addition, to promote the adoption of QR code payments in Hong Kong, the HKMA announced the Common QR Code Standard for Retail Payments in Hong Kong together with the launch of an associated mobile application tool. A free mobile application tool, namely "Hong Kong Common QR Code" (HKQR), is released today, which can be used for converting multiple QR codes from different payment service providers into a single, combined QR code. This would facilitate merchants, especially small and medium enterprises, in using a single QR code to accept different payment schemes, instead of displaying multiple QR codes to their customers. The HKQR mobile application is available for download from Google Play Store and Apple App Store from today.

The public may contact their banks or SVF operators for more details of the FPS service as well as the common QR code. More information of the FPS and the Common QR Code can be found in the website www.hkma.gov.hk/fps.

Workplace safety urged after typhoon

The Labour Department (LD) urges responsible persons for workplaces and workers, in particular contractors, employers and employees of construction sites, factories and industrial undertakings, to be more vigilant, check their workplaces and take adequate safety precautions before resuming work after the typhoon for ensuring work safety.

A spokesperson for LD said today (September 17) that both the management and the workers should pay more attention to work safety as workplace conditions might have changed. All temporary falsework, supporting structures, scaffolds and hanging materials should be thoroughly inspected to prevent workers from being struck by falling materials or objects.

For all work processes, machinery and equipment with potential hazards, duty holders should conduct advance checking, and prepare and implement necessary safety measures.

All scaffolding, working platforms, lifting appliances (such as tower cranes), temporary power supplies, confined spaces, sewage work and excavations should be inspected by competent persons to ensure that they are in safe condition before resuming operation or putting them into use again.

Workers should also be fully advised and instructed to follow safety precautions when working at height or engaging in lifting operations, tunnelling works, electrical work and other hazardous work situations.

To prevent work accidents, the spokesperson urged contractors and employers to step up monitoring of their workplaces to make sure that they are safe for work after the typhoon.

He pointed out that the general duty provisions of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance require contractors and employers to provide safe working environments, safe plant and safe systems of work for their employees. Failing to comply with this requirement can result in a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for six months.

Meanwhile, employees should co-operate by following the safety instructions and by using safety equipment.

For enquiries on occupational safety and health, please contact the department's occupational safety officers at 2559 2297.