

Hospital Authority announces to conduct investigation on quality of cable trunking coating materials used in Kwong Wah Hospital redevelopment project

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman for the Hospital Authority (HA) made the following announcement today (November 1) regarding the quality of cable trunking coating materials used in Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH) redevelopment project:

The HA attaches great importance to the quality of hospital works. In the contract for KWH redevelopment project, it has stipulated that the thickness of the cable trunking coating materials must comply with relevant standards, with proper examination by accredited laboratory; and certificates are verified by on-site professional to ascertain the standards of the materials when they are delivered to the works site. In addition, the HA required project contractors to strictly follow relevant regulations and to properly supervise the works so as to ensure the quality of works project.

Upon receiving media enquiries regarding the thickness of the cable trunking coating installed in KWH new building, the HA immediately launched a series of investigations, including instructed the main contractor to conduct a thorough investigation in the building, entrusted an independent expert to conduct review and arranged to dismantle part of the trunking for testing in accredited laboratory:

1. On October 18, upon request of the HA, the contractor conducted random testing of cable trunkings at various locations in the building;
2. On October 20, the main contractor appointed an authorised person to conduct review and test;
3. On October 29, the HA entrusted an independent expert to conduct re-inspection, including to conduct sampling thickness test for the cable trunking coating, to review the testing instruments and measurement methodology used by the main contractor, etc; and
4. Independent expert will take sample from the site for thorough testing in accredited laboratories later, including to measure the weight and thickness of the cable trunking coating materials with sophisticated laboratory equipment to verify their quality standards.

The coating of cable trunking is mainly used for rust prevention, which does not affect building structural, patient and staff safety. For prudence, the HA entrusted an independent expert to review and analyse the relevant data. A formal report to the HA will be submitted by the independent expert later. The HA has also written to the main contractor to request a report to

explain the standard of the materials in details and to ensure the quality of the project in accordance with the requirements stipulated in contract terms.

The HA attaches great importance to the quality of works project. If any incompliance of standard is found in the materials, the HA will strictly pursue relevant liabilities and require the main contractor to take necessary remedial measures following the contract. If the incident involves criminal elements, the HA will report to law enforcement authority for further actions.

[Lunar New Year fair stall auctions to start this month](#)

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (November 1) that stalls at the 2024 Lunar New Year (LNY) fairs will be put up for open auction in batches starting from November 13 (Monday).

The LNY fairs are to be held at 15 locations and will be open for seven days from February 4 to 10, 2024. A total of 902 wet goods stalls, 572 dry goods stalls, eight thematic stalls and 25 fast food stalls will be provided.

The upset prices range from \$380 to \$6,530 for wet goods stalls, \$450 to \$8,540 for dry goods stalls, and \$2,280 to \$120,470 for fast food stalls.

Apart from wet goods, dry goods and fast food stalls, eight thematic stalls will also be set up in the Victoria Park LNY Fair to sell festive commodities such as LNY food, spring couplets (fai chun), LNY decorations and other goods. The auction for these thematic stalls, with an upset price of \$24,990, will take place in the AM session of the second auction day (November 14) for the Victoria Park LNY Fair.

The six fairs on Hong Kong Island, in Islands District and in Kowloon will be located at Victoria Park in Causeway Bay, Tat Tung Road Garden in Tung Chung, Fa Hui Park and Cheung Sha Wan Playground in Sham Shui Po, Morse Park in Wong Tai Sin and Kwun Tong Recreation Ground. A total of 790 stalls will be put up for auction.

The auction for stalls of the LNY fair in Victoria Park will be held for three days from November 13 to 15 (Monday to Wednesday) at the Assembly Hall, 2/F, Lai Chi Kok Government Offices, 19 Lai Wan Road, Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon. The first auction day (November 13) is scheduled for fast food stalls and wet goods stalls, the second auction day (November 14) is scheduled for thematic stalls and dry goods stalls, and the third auction day (November 15) is scheduled for dry goods stalls. Due to the limited number of seats, those who are interested in bidding for a specific type of stalls at the Victoria Park

LNy fair are invited to participate in the respective auction at the Lai Chi Kok Government Offices on the designated date.

The auction for stalls of Tat Tung Road Garden LNY Fair in Tung Chung will be held at the above-mentioned venue on November 16 (Thursday). The auction session is scheduled from 9am until completion of the auction.

The auctions for stalls of the LNY fairs in Fa Hui Park and Cheung Sha Wan Playground in Sham Shui Po, Morse Park in Wong Tai Sin and Kwun Tong Recreation Ground in Kwun Tong will be held at the above-mentioned venue from November 17 to 22. The auction sessions are scheduled from 9am or 9.30am to 12.30pm (AM session) and 2pm until completion of the auction (PM session).

Details of the auctions, the number of stalls and opening prices are as follows:

Victoria Park (Causeway Bay)

Number of stalls: 387

Auction date: November 13 (Monday)

AM session: Fast food (Stall Nos. A to D) and wet goods (Stall Nos. 209 to 268)

PM session: Wet goods (Stall Nos. 269 to 383)

Opening prices:

Fast food: \$120,470

Wet goods: \$6,530

Auction date: November 14 (Tuesday)

AM session: Thematic goods (Stall Nos. 83, 84, 141, 142, 163, 164, 185 and 186) and dry goods (Stall Nos. 1 to 42)

PM session: Dry goods (Stall Nos. 43 to 82)

Opening prices:

Thematic goods: \$24,990

Dry goods: \$8,540

Auction date: November 15 (Wednesday)

AM session: Dry goods (Stall Nos. 85 to 140)

PM session: Dry goods (Stall Nos. 143 to 162, 165 to 184 and 187 to 208)

Opening price:

Dry goods: \$8,540

Tat Tung Road Garden (Tung Chung)

Auction date: November 16 (Thursday)

Number of stalls: 28

Stall types: Wet goods and dry goods

Opening prices:

Wet goods: \$380

Dry goods: \$450

Fa Hui Park (Sham Shui Po)

Auction date: November 17 (Friday)
Number of stalls: 129
AM session: Wet goods
PM session: Fast food and dry goods
Opening prices:
Wet goods: \$3,540
Fast food: \$17,480
Dry goods: \$7,800

Cheung Sha Wan Playground (Sham Shui Po)

Auction date: November 20 (Monday)
Number of stalls: 86
AM session: Wet goods
PM session: Fast food and dry goods
Opening prices:
Wet goods: \$500
Fast food: \$2,280
Dry goods: \$550

Morse Park (Wong Tai Sin)

Auction date: November 21 (Tuesday)
Number of stalls: 76
AM session: Wet goods
PM session: Fast food and dry goods
Opening prices:
Wet goods: \$1,500
Fast food: \$5,000
Dry goods: \$1,370

Kwun Tong Recreation Ground (Kwun Tong)

Auction date: November 22 (Wednesday)
Number of stalls: 84
AM session: Wet goods
PM session: Fast food and dry goods
Opening prices:
Wet goods: \$2,180
Fast food: \$3,030
Dry goods: \$2,130

In the New Territories, 513 wet goods stalls, 197 dry goods stalls and seven fast food stalls will be set up at nine fairs. They are located at Sha Tsui Road Playground in Tsuen Wan, Tin Hau Temple Fung Shui Square in Tai Po, Tung Tau Industrial Area Playground in Yuen Long, Tin Hau Temple Plaza in Tuen Mun, Yuen Wo Playground in Sha Tin, Shek Wu Hui Playground in North District, Kwai Chung Sports Ground in Kwai Tsing, Man Yee Playground in Sai Kung and Po Hong Park in Tseung Kwan O.

The auctions for stalls of the LNY fairs in Tsuen Wan, Tai Po, Yuen Long, North District, Kwai Tsing, Sai Kung and Tseung Kwan O will be held at the Assembly Hall, 2/F, Lai Chi Kok Government Offices, on November 23, 24 and 27, and December 1, 4 and 5. The auction sessions are scheduled from 9am to 12.30pm (AM session) and 2pm until completion of the auction (PM session).

The auction for stalls of the LNY fair in Sha Tin will be held at the above-mentioned venue on November 29. The auction session is scheduled from 9.30am until completion of the auction.

The auction for stalls of Tin Hau Temple Plaza LNY fair in Tuen Mun will be held at Tseng Choi Street Community Hall, 27 Tseng Choi Street, Tuen Mun, on November 28. The auction session is scheduled from 9.30am until completion of the auction.

Details of the auctions, the number of stalls and opening prices are as follows:

Sha Tsui Road Playground (Tsuen Wan)

Auction date: November 23 (Thursday)

Number of stalls: 116

Stall types: Wet goods and dry goods

Opening prices:

Wet goods: \$1,770

Dry goods: \$8,480

Tin Hau Temple Fung Shui Square (Tai Po)

Auction date: November 24 (Friday)

Number of stalls: 61

Stall types: Wet goods, dry goods and fast food

Opening prices:

Wet goods: \$2,270

Dry goods: \$1,450

Fast food: \$5,480

Tung Tau Industrial Area Playground (Yuen Long)

Auction date: November 27 (Monday)

Number of stalls: 150

Stall types: Wet goods, dry goods and fast food

Opening prices:

Wet goods: \$700

Dry goods: \$1,350

Fast food: \$5,480

Tin Hau Temple Plaza (Tuen Mun)

Auction date: November 28 (Tuesday)

Number of stalls: 46
Stall types: Wet goods, dry goods and fast food
Opening prices:
Wet goods: \$1,490
Dry goods: \$2,140
Fast food: \$2,740

Yuen Wo Playground (Sha Tin)

Auction date: November 29 (Wednesday)
Number of stalls: 71
Stall types: Wet goods and dry goods
Opening prices:
Wet goods: \$3,580
Dry goods: \$4,570

Shek Wu Hui Playground (North District)

Auction date: December 1 (Friday)
Number of stalls: 69
Stall types: Wet goods and dry goods
Opening prices:
Wet goods: \$710
Dry goods: \$1,540

Kwai Chung Sports Ground (Kwai Tsing)

Auction date: December 4 (Monday)
Number of stalls: 96
Stall types: Wet goods and dry goods
Opening prices:
Wet goods: \$490
Dry goods: \$2,250

Man Yee Playground (Sai Kung)

Auction date: December 5 (Tuesday)
Number of stalls: 20
Stall types: Wet goods and dry goods
Opening prices:
Wet goods: \$380
Dry goods: \$450

Po Hong Park (Tseung Kwan O)

Auction date: December 5 (Tuesday)
Number of stalls: 88
Stall types: Wet goods, dry goods and fast food
Opening prices:
Wet goods: \$830
Dry goods: \$1,540

Fast food: \$4,570

Bidders for LNY fair stalls must be at least 18 years old and ordinarily reside in Hong Kong.

Anyone can bid for more than one stall. A bidder must pay the bid price and register in person with his or her own name as the licensee of the stall immediately after successfully bidding for a stall. The bidder is also required to sign at once a licence agreement with the FEHD, or he/she will forfeit the rights to operate the stall.

All fair sites will be made available to the licensees three days in advance of the fairs (from February 1 to 3, 2024) for the setting up of stalls. In the event of any unforeseeable incident that will cause reduction of the whole licence period (including the duration for setting up stalls and the business period of the fair), the Government has the right to postpone the commencement date and shorten the duration of the period. The bidding price (licence fee) paid will be refunded to the successful bidder on a pro-rata basis without interest.

Stall licensees must completely remove the stall structure and all paraphernalia, together with all refuse, debris and unsold commodities (whether damaged or otherwise), from the licensed area before 7am on February 10, 2024 (9am for the Victoria Park LNY Fair).

The FEHD reminded licensees that the stalls are solely for the purpose of selling and promoting the sale of the permitted commodities, and no other activities are allowed in the licensed area. If the FEHD considers that any activity conducted by the licensee to publicise, promote, display, show or sell any permitted commodities in the venue is unlawful, contrary to the interest of national security, immoral or incompatible with the object of the LNY fair, the FEHD is entitled to direct the licensee to stop conducting such activity and the licensee must immediately comply with such direction.

Stall licensees should not destroy, damage or abandon any unsold commodities at or in the vicinity of the stall. They may surrender unsold flowers and plants left behind at the stall to the FEHD at no charge, cost or compensation whatsoever, before 7am on February 10, 2024 (9am for the Victoria Park LNY Fair).

According to the licence agreement, except inside designated stalls, licensees shall not keep, store or use helium cylinders in the licenced area. Whereas licensees of the designated stalls could keep, store or use helium cylinders in the licenced area, the quantity of helium should be such that a licence is not required pursuant to the Dangerous Goods (Application and Exemption) Regulation 2012 (Cap. 295E), i.e. equivalent to 150 litres of helium. Sales of floating LED glowing balloons and aquarium fish by stall licensees are prohibited at the LNY fairs.

In addition, as stated in the licence agreement, for wet goods stalls with a height of more than 3 metres from ground level, the licensee must, at

his own costs, provide the FEHD with a certificate issued by an authorised person, a registered structural engineer, or a competent person under the Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations (Cap. 59I) to certify the structural safety of the stall structure before the LNY fairs are opened to the public. The height of wet goods stalls must not exceed 4.5m from ground level.

Successful bidders shall comply with all the stipulations and provisions as set out in the licence agreement. Otherwise, the department is entitled to terminate the agreement and the licensee shall immediately vacate the stall.

Details of the 2024 LNY fairs such as the public notice, the locations and layouts of the fair venues, commodities allowed for sale at the fair stalls, open auction arrangements and related rules, and a sample of the licence agreement are available on the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk). For enquiries, please call the FEHD hotline 2868 0000.

LCQ6: Making appointments for general outpatient clinic services

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (November 1):

Question:

Some members of the public have relayed that making appointments for general outpatient clinic (GOPC) services through telephone channels is often unsuccessful. After conducting real-life tests, some media have found that except for using the Hospital Authority (HA) mobile application "HA Go" to make appointments for the services, which is more likely to be successful, making appointments through other telephone channels is unsuccessful due to either "the call cannot be answered at the moment" or "the appointment quota is full". There are views that it is simply difficult for elderly people who are unfamiliar with the use of smartphones to make appointments for GOPC services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council if it knows:

(1) the average daily number of GOPC consultation quotas provided in each of the 18 districts across the territory, as well as the respective numbers of person-times who successfully made appointments for GOPC services via the telephone system and HA Go in various districts (and their percentages in the total numbers of GOPC attendances in various districts), in each of the past five years, and set out the breakdown in a table;

(2) whether the HA will take measures to enhance and improve the telephone appointment service of GOPC, so that more members of the public can

successfully make appointments via the telephone system; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) the manpower employed by the HA to provide the telephone appointment service of GOPC, including those answering telephone calls, in each of the past five years?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Hospital Authority (HA), our reply to the question raised by the Hon Holden Chow is as follows:

The general outpatient clinics (GOPCs) of the HA, which have an annual attendance of over 5 million, mainly aim to serve low-income persons and socially disadvantaged groups in priority, in particular the elderly, low-income families and chronic disease patients. The primary healthcare needs of the vast majority of the public are currently taken care of by the private medical sector with about 20 million outpatient visits annually.

Currently, the GOPCs offer a daily consultation quota of about 20 000 on weekdays, of which about 10 000 are reserved for patients with episodic illnesses. There are two ways for patients with episodic illnesses to reserve consultation time slots. The first one is to use the GOPC Telephone Appointment System (Telephone System), and the second one is to use the "Book GOPC" function in "HA Go", the HA's one-stop mobile app. They can reserve consultation time slots available in the next 24 hours. The HA has been uploading the average daily quotas of GOPCs for the preceding four weeks on its GOPC webpage. The annual quotas in various districts over the past five years are also attached in the Annex for Members' reference.

In the first eight months this year, around 80 per cent of the overall consultation quotas of GOPCs are allocated to the Telephone System while more than 20 per cent are allocated to the mobile app. At present, the Telephone System is an automated computerised round-the-clock system for patients to book or cancel GOPC appointments in a self-service manner. There is no need for the HA to arrange staff to handle telephone bookings. The HA aims to save manpower in handling telephone bookings through an automatic system, so that manpower can be deployed to focus on serving patients directly at clinics. Currently, to provide convenience to citizens, patients can directly call individual clinic of their choice to make an appointment through dialling its phone number. If the lines are busy during appointment peak hour, members of the public may not be able to make appointment and may be temporarily unable to access the Telephone System of the clinic. This is different from the online platform of "HA Go" because telephone lines have a certain capacity, which is increased to around 800 now, and citizens only call a designated clinic each time, instead of enquiring the consultation quotas at 74 clinics at the same time.

As a matter of fact, since the launch of the Telephone System, the HA has been listening to the views of the public, conducting reviews on an on-

going basis and introducing improvement measures, including:

(1) System enhancement – despite gradual enhancement on the system and increase in the number of telephone lines to about 800 for various GOPCs, the analogue Telephone System has been in use for more than 10 years with limited room for enhancement. The HA endeavours to digitise the existing system within three years such that the efficiency of telephone appointment for the GOPCs will no longer be limited by the current number of analogue telephone lines, making it easier for the public to access;

(2) Procedures streamlining – the Telephone System will link up GOPCs in the same district to form a network in order to pool together their consultation quotas. After entering the Telephone System of individual clinic, the system will indicate the available consultation time slots of that clinic in the next 24 hours. If consultation time slots are not available at that clinic, the Telephone System will automatically search for consultation time slots of the nearby clinics to facilitate the patients' appointment;

(3) Real-time updates – the automatic computerised Telephone System operates round the clock. If a patient cancels an appointment, the Telephone System will immediately release the consultation time slot for booking by other patients. Patients do not need to make an appointment at a specific time. This can also reduce wastage. If they cannot make an appointment successfully at the time they make the call, they may try it later again; and

(4) Elderly-friendly – making reference to the distribution of service users of individual GOPCs, the HA allocates some Elderly Appointment Quotas to patients aged 65 or above. They can get the Quotas by registering with their Identity Card.

As mentioned earlier, in the first eight months of 2023, around 80 per cent of the overall consultation quotas are allocated to the Telephone System while more than 20 per cent are allocated to the mobile app. We observed that over 30 per cent of the users who had successfully made reservations through the mobile app are elderly, a figure similar to that of making reservations through telephone, indicating that many elderly people have gradually mastered the operation of the mobile app. Compared with the traditional Telephone System, the mobile app is actually more convenient, especially when many elderly persons have hearing impairment. The advantages include no capacity limitation as I mentioned earlier, i.e., not limited to around 800 telephone lines. Personalised function is also available for saving patients' information so that patients are not required to input the information when calling the Telephone System every time. Compared with making reservation through Telephone System, we estimate that the process save half of the time. The public can also save their frequently-used clinics, view their booking status, check the appointment status of the GOPCs in all districts at a glance, as well as receive reminders for upcoming appointments and check appointment records. Besides, users can also access medical records and drug details and conduct personalised health management through the mobile app. The HA will continue to enhance the mobile app with a view to encouraging more people to make GOPCs appointments by this convenient approach in the long run.

In fact, while we are developing a smart city and in face of an ageing population, we should encourage various sectors and facilitate the public, including the elderly, to use technology. We need to further promote the use of mobile app for health management among the elderly. Only in this way can we better cope with the challenges of ageing population in Hong Kong.

In face of an ageing population and the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases and rising medical demand, the public healthcare system, as the cornerstone and safety net of Hong Kong's healthcare system, needs to concentrate resources and accord priority to accident & emergency and specialist services, as well as secondary and tertiary healthcare which require complicated technologies. We have put forward a proposal for reform in the Primary Healthcare Blueprint, focusing on strengthening primary healthcare services and alleviating the pressure on the public healthcare system especially the specialist outpatient clinics under public hospitals. We will continue to advocate the concept of "Family Doctor for All" and will launch the "Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme" in mid-November. Through the establishment of a family doctor system and screening, people with more economic capability can be diverted to the private healthcare sector for health management through a co-payment model. At the same time, we have to consider concentrating the limited resources for public general outpatient services by giving priority to those who may not be able to afford private healthcare services. We will gradually reposition the GOPCs to focus on taking care of the socially disadvantaged groups. Thank you, President.

Hong Kong Customs and Korea Customs Service hold 34th Customs Cooperation Conference (with photos)

The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Ms Louise Ho, and the Commissioner of Korea Customs Service (KCS), Mr Ko Kwang hyo, attended the 34th Customs Cooperation Conference between the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) and the KCS today (November 1) in Seoul, Korea.

During the conference, both sides exchanged the latest developments and information regarding anti-drug enforcement, anti-money laundering and intellectual property rights protection. In the face of new challenges arising from ever-changing trends and landscapes of criminal activities related to these aspects, especially in response to financial crimes exploiting the nature of virtual assets like cryptocurrency, Ms Ho stressed the need for international law enforcement agencies to co-operate. She also introduced measures the C&ED has been taking to foster regional law enforcement co-operation and synergies, citing the Regional Customs High-level Drug Enforcement Forum held by the C&ED in February this year. Adding

that an intellectual property rights protection forum will be held in March next year, during which enforcement representatives of the Asia Pacific region will be invited, Ms Ho appealed for the participation of Mr Ko and his delegation in the forum.

After the conference, a Memorandum of Understanding of co-operation and assistance committing to strengthen collaboration and information exchanges on international financial crimes and drug-related offenses was signed between the two places with an aim to advance the effectiveness in the prevention, investigation, and combating of related crimes.

The aforementioned co-operative arrangement fully demonstrates the determination of the C&ED in cracking down on transnational criminal activities. The C&ED will continue to deepen co-operation with various customs authorities and initiate timely joint operations in order to safeguard regional security.



[Response to media enquiries on HKSAR](#)

Government's attendance at APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting

In response to media enquiries, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) confirmed today (November 1) that the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, had personally received the invitation from the United States to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting to be held from November 15 to 17 in San Francisco, United States. Due to scheduling issues, the Chief Executive would not be able to attend the meeting to represent Hong Kong, China in person, and has appointed the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, to attend the meeting on behalf of the Chief Executive.