

Dah Chong Hong Limited convicted of contravening Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance

Dah Chong Hong Limited was convicted and fined \$26,200 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (September 1) for contravening various provisions under the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance (PERO) when selling refrigerators and washing machines.

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said the department received a complaint in December last year that when a member of the public was purchasing a washing machine in a department store, staff there made a claim that customers must contact recyclers on their own to recycle their old washing machines. During an investigation, EPD enforcement officers discovered that Dah Chong Hong was renting a stall in the department store through a short-term tenancy to sell electrical equipment. During the period, Dah Chong Hong did not provide consumers with a free statutory removal service, and failed to inform consumers of its obligation to provide such a service as well as its relevant terms. In addition, Dah Chong Hong also did not provide its customers with receipts containing the prescribed wording. After collecting evidence, the EPD prosecuted Dah Chong Hong for failing to meet the relevant requirements under the PERO.

The spokesman emphasised that according to the PERO, which came into effect on August 1, 2018, when distributing regulated electrical equipment (REE), sellers must have a removal service plan endorsed by the EPD, and proactively inform consumers in writing of the sellers' obligation to provide a free statutory removal service as well as its relevant terms. Moreover, sellers must arrange a free removal service for consumers to dispose of waste equipment of the same type and provide a recycling label as well as a receipt containing the prescribed wording when distributing REE.

The spokesman reminded all the relevant sellers that they have an obligation to comply with the PERO when they are selling REE, no matter whether on consignment or in stalls under a short-term tenancy. They must not make false statements to consumers or deliberately conceal the terms of their statutory removal service with a view to avoiding the relevant legal liability. Otherwise, they may contravene the PERO. First-time offenders are liable to maximum fines ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000. Maximum fines ranging from \$10,000 to \$200,000 may be imposed on a subsequent conviction.

The spokesman urged members of the public to make a report to the EPD immediately if they find any seller making false statements or not complying with the aforementioned requirements when purchasing regulated electrical and electronic equipment. The EPD will consistently take strict enforcement action against sellers who violate the PERO.

Exchange Fund Bills Tender Results

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

Exchange Fund Bills tender results:

Tender date	: September 1, 2020
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q2036
Issue date	: September 2, 2020
Maturity date	: December 2, 2020
Amount applied	: HK\$116,490 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$51,306 MN
Average yield accepted	: 0.08 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 0.10 PCT
Pro rata ratio	: About 57 PCT
Average tender yield	: 0.13 PCT

Tender date	: September 1, 2020
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: H2065
Issue date	: September 2, 2020
Maturity date	: March 3, 2021
Amount applied	: HK\$41,730 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$12,000 MN
Average yield accepted	: 0.12 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 0.14 PCT
Pro rata ratio	: About 4 PCT
Average tender yield	: 0.18 PCT

Tender date	: September 1, 2020
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Y2094
Issue date	: September 2, 2020
Maturity date	: September 1, 2021
Amount applied	: HK\$13,905 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$5,000 MN
Average yield accepted	: 0.18 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 0.23 PCT

Pro rata ratio	: About 25 PCT
Average tender yield	: 0.23 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held in the week beginning September 7, 2020:

Tender date	: September 8, 2020
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q2037
Issue date	: September 9, 2020
Maturity date	: December 9, 2020
Tenor	: 91 Days
Amount on offer	: HK\$47,469 MN

Tender date	: September 8, 2020
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: H2066
Issue date	: September 9, 2020
Maturity date	: March 10, 2021
Tenor	: 182 Days
Amount on offer	: HK\$14,000 MN

Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme invites new round of applications

The Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme (PASS) is inviting a new round of applications starting today (September 1) from non-profit-distributing organisations such as professional bodies, trade and industrial organisations, and research institutes.

The PASS, with a total allocation of \$200 million, aims at funding non-profit-making industry-led projects to increase exchanges and co-operation between Hong Kong's professional services and external counterparts, promote relevant publicity activities, and enhance the standards and external

competitiveness of Hong Kong's professional services.

The maximum grant under the PASS for each approved project is \$3 million or 90 per cent of the total eligible project cost, whichever is lower. A wide range of professional services such as accounting, legal and dispute resolution, architecture, engineering, healthcare, information and communications technology, design and technical testing and analysis are eligible for the PASS. Sector-specific projects and cross-sectoral projects are both welcome. Expenses directly incurred for implementing a project such as manpower costs, venue and set-up costs, production and promotion costs, and the project team's travel and accommodation costs outside Hong Kong are typically eligible for funding support under the Scheme. Funding support may also be provided for travel and accommodation costs incurred in PASS-funded events outside Hong Kong either by participants with active roles (e.g. speakers and panellists) or participants taking part in relatively longer PASS-funded professional internship or attachment programmes.

Up to the end of August 2020, 60 different projects have been funded under the PASS, including activities in and outside Hong Kong. The activities include capacity-building programmes for enhancing the standards of local professionals, such as training programmes, workshops and study tours; outreach and promotional activities for showcasing the strengths of Hong Kong's professional services, such as roadshows, promotional seminars and participation in exhibitions outside Hong Kong; exchange activities for deepening interaction between Hong Kong professionals and their external counterparts, such as visits to other economies, and international conferences and seminars held in Hong Kong; and research projects on potential external markets for Hong Kong professional services and development of best practice guidelines and manuals for professionals. In view of the latest pandemic situation, suitable flexibility will be provided to grantees for implementing their projects. Details about the PASS and its funded projects are available at www.pass.gov.hk/en/home/index.html.

The PASS receives applications all year round and they are processed on a quarterly basis. The deadline for the new round of applications is November 30, 2020.

A briefing session will be held in September for organisations interested in applying for PASS funding. For registration for the briefing session or other enquiries, please contact the PASS Secretariat at 3655 5418 or pass@cedb.gov.hk.

Disbursement of student grant for

2019/20 school year largely completed

A spokesman for the Education Bureau (EDB) today (September 1) said that the provision of a student grant to secondary day school, primary school and kindergarten students in the 2019/20 school year has been largely completed, while the preparation work for the 2020/21 school year is well under way.

The Government provided a one-off student grant of \$2,500 for secondary day school, primary school and kindergarten students in the 2019/20 school year and subsequently, in view of the epidemic, increased the grant by \$1,000 to \$3,500 to alleviate parents' financial burden in defraying extra expenses during class suspension. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, the provision of the student grant of \$2,500 will be regularised.

The spokesman said, "In the 2019/20 school year, we received a total of about 876 000 applications. Except for less than 1 per cent of the cases that still require further follow-up with the schools or parents concerned owing to incomplete or incorrect information, all parents of eligible students have received the grant."

The spokesman added, "In view of the epidemic, schools suspended their classes for months in the 2019/20 school year. This affected parents' submission of applications. The deadline for application was thus extended from February 14 to June 30 this year to allow more time for parents and schools to submit applications. We have been expediting the processing of the applications received and communicating with schools during the epidemic, with a view to disbursing the subsidy to parents of eligible students as soon as possible. Some of the information provided is incorrect, mainly in regard to inaccurate bank account information including bank codes and branch codes. As such, we have to contact the parents direct or through the schools concerned to follow up and amend the information before the grant could be disbursed."

The spokesman urged those applicants who have yet to submit the required information to contact the EDB at 3850 2000 or via email (spdoenquiry@edb.gov.hk) as soon as possible.

In the 2020/21 school year, the EDB will continue to disburse the student grant of \$2,500, and will implement the following enhancement measures:

(1) The application forms to be distributed in this school year will be pre-printed with the basic information of students who have been promoted to the next class level in the same school as well as that of the applicants. Parents only have to check the information and sign to confirm the accuracy before submitting the application forms to the EDB through schools. There is no need for them to fill in the application forms anew. For students who are newly admitted to a school or have transferred to another school, their applications will be processed as new ones;

(2) Taking into consideration that the provision of incorrect bank information is the reason for most delays in processing the applications, the EDB will provide a list of bank codes and branch codes to facilitate the completion of application forms;

(3) Starting from this school year, the EDB will contact parents via SMS and email as appropriate to inform them of the status of their applications (e.g. whether the application has been received, whether it is necessary to contact schools or the EDB to amend the information or provide supplementary information, or whether the subsidy has been disbursed);

(4) To assist schools to communicate with parents on issues concerning the student grant, the EDB will provide schools with progress reports on the applications on a regular basis, which will help schools and parents better understand the progress of the applications; and

(5) To assist parents and schools to check the application status of the student grant, the EDB will upgrade the interactive voice response telephone system of the hotline for the student grant, with a view to responding more promptly to enquiries from callers.

The spokesman added, "We plan to issue a circular memorandum to schools and letters to relevant organisations and institutions and announce the details of the student grant for the 2020/21 school year via the student grant website

(www.edb.gov.hk/en/student-parents/support-subsidies/student-grant/index.html) within September 2020."

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, September 1, 2020 is 104.4 (down 0.4 against yesterday's index).