

Very Hot Weather Warning issued

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

The Hong Kong Observatory has issued the Very Hot Weather Warning.

To prevent heat stroke, avoid prolonged activities outdoors.

If engaged in outdoor work or activities, wear a wide-brimmed hat and light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes. Stay in shaded areas as much as possible.

Drink plenty of water, and avoid beverages containing caffeine or alcohol.

If you feel sick, consult a doctor right away.

LegCo committee meetings

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Economic Development and Panel on Financial Affairs will hold a joint meeting at 11.15am tomorrow (June 19) in Conference Room 2 of the LegCo Complex. During the meeting, Members will discuss issues relating to the Government's investment in Cathay Pacific Airways Limited under the Land Fund.

Meanwhile, the closed meeting of the LegCo Investigation Committee established under Rule 49B(2A) of the Rules of Procedure in respect of the motion to censure Hon Holden Chow Ho-ding originally scheduled for 3pm today (June 18) has been rescheduled.

Hongkong Post holiday arrangements for Tuen Ng Festival and Hong Kong Special

Administrative Region Establishment Day

Hongkong Post announced today (June 18) the postal service arrangements for the Tuen Ng Festival on June 25 and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Establishment Day on July 1. No mail delivery and no mail collection will be provided. All post offices will be closed. In accordance with the usual practice, mail posted on the public holidays will be processed on the next working day.

For more information, members of the public may visit Hongkong Post's website at www.hongkongpost.hk or contact the Hongkong Post enquiry hotline at 2921 2222.

Guidelines for Legislative Council Election released today

The following is issued on behalf of the Electoral Affairs Commission:

The Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC) today (June 18) issued the Guidelines on Election-related Activities in respect of the Legislative Council Election according to the Electoral Affairs Commission Ordinance (Cap. 541). The guidelines apply to the 2020 Legislative Council General Election to be held this year and Legislative Council by-elections afterwards.

The guidelines cover two different aspects, namely, (1) to explain the relevant legislative provisions; and (2) to promulgate a code of conduct in election-related activities based on the fair and equal treatment principle.

"Electors rely on fair and orderly elections to elect their representatives. Election is a solemn matter and the electoral procedures are strictly governed by the relevant electoral legislation. Persons who wish to run for an election and other stakeholders must understand and comply with the legislative requirements so as to avoid committing any offence inadvertently. Candidates and stakeholders should also make reference to the best practices provided in the Guidelines in order to ensure that the elections are conducted in an open, fair and honest manner," a spokesman for the EAC said.

During the public consultation period of the proposed guidelines, the EAC received about 108 000 written representations. Areas that drew public

attention include arrangements for queuing at polling stations, collection of ballot paper(s) by electors and maintaining order at counting stations. After thorough consideration of the representations received, the EAC has set out the arrangements concerned in the guidelines:

(I) Arrangements for queuing at polling stations

For the sake of fairness and equality, each elector has to queue up for entry to the polling station to cast vote(s). A number of ballot paper issuing desks are set up in a polling station and each issuing desk is responsible for serving electors with a designated group of alphabetical prefix in the HKID number. Each elector can only go to the issuing desk allocated according to the alphabetical prefix of his/her HKID number to collect the ballot paper(s). At the same time, the polling arrangement must also have regard to electors who have difficulties in standing for a long time in the queue to collect ballot papers due to their physical conditions (e.g. the elderly, pregnant women and persons with disability and mobility difficulties). In light of this, the EAC after consideration, has decided to adopt arrangements made during the District Council Ordinary Election held last year where the Presiding Officers (PROs) will, as far as practicable, arrange for the elector concerned to sit down inside the polling station and wait for collecting his/her ballot paper(s) with the elector's position in the queue properly marked. When it comes to the elector's turn, the polling staff will direct him/her to collect the ballot paper(s) at the relevant issuing desk.

On the other hand, when electors are queuing up for entry outside the polling station and there is any ballot paper issuing desk not serving any elector, the polling staff will hold a signboard outside the polling station to direct those electors with the corresponding alphabetical prefix of the HKID number served by that issuing desk to enter the polling station forthwith to collect their ballot papers. This arrangement is also applicable to electors who need to sit down while queuing as mentioned above. The spokesman said that while similar arrangements were made at some polling stations on previous polling days, it will be implemented across all polling stations in the coming Legislative Council General Election. Having regard to the actual situation of the polling station, the PRO may also flexibly adjust the designated group of alphabetical prefixes in the HKID number served by the issuing desks, and set up additional issuing desks during peak voting periods if reasonably practicable, in order to speed up the handling of electors in the queue.

"Queuing up for the collection of ballot papers is a common phenomenon, which is also found in other places. Apart from complying with the principle of fairness, the above polling arrangements can take care of electors with special needs and also speed up the streaming of electors to their issuing desks so as to reduce the overall waiting time," the spokesman said.

On the other hand, according to past experience, when the polling staff request to go to vote in their assigned polling stations, the PROs will make arrangement as far as practicable, normally during lunch time or such time

where the polling stations are less crowded. However, some polling stations are busy with stringent manpower, and the operation of the polling station may be affected. Therefore, in order to enable the polling staff to return early to their work posts to serve the electors, if there is a queue of electors outside their assigned polling stations, they may present to the polling staff of the relevant polling station their polling staff identification for admission into the polling station to queue up for collecting the ballot paper(s) and to cast their votes. This arrangement aims to allow them to return to the polling station where they work and continue to serve the electors as soon as possible.

(II) Checking of personal entry on the copy of register by electors

According to the law, when the polling staff issue ballot papers to electors, they will draw a line in the copy of register of electors across the name and the identity document number of that elector to denote that ballot paper(s) have been issued to him/her to avoid duplicated voting. To enhance transparency of the process, the elector concerned can observe the polling staff to draw the line, while at the same time the entries of other electors in the copy of the register will be covered up to ensure other electors' personal data are protected.

(III) Maintaining the order at counting stations and enhancing the public's knowledge of counting arrangements

Members of the public and the media have the rights to observe the count at the counting stations. All along the PRO will not allow further entrants to the counting station when the area designated for the public is full. To let members of the public know the maximum capacity of the public area in an earlier stage, a notice will be displayed outside each counting station and the central counting station by the PRO and the Chief Returning Officer respectively, setting out the capacity of the public area in the counting station.

"In fact, depending on the actual area and other constraints of the venues, there has all along been a maximum number of entrants to counting stations allowed. The above arrangement aims to keep a balance between the public's right to know and maintaining order at the counting stations," the spokesman added.

Photography and/or video-recording is allowed inside the counting stations. Members of the public and the media can take photographs and/or videos inside the public area (excluding the counting zone). For record purposes, recording facilities will be installed in each counting station and the central counting station (including the counting zone) to record the actual situation of the counting stations. The arrangement aims to maintain a safe environment for members of the public and staff inside the counting stations.

Apart from the above arrangements as stated in the guidelines, to ensure that counting work of PROs is free from threats or interference, if any

persons clamor or shout in the counting stations, the EAC will instruct the PROs to immediately suspend the counting process until the order is restored. If the persons concerned refuse to abide by the PRO's order and that disruptive acts continue, the count will resume only after the persons concerned are removed by staff or police.

As the problems of order at certain counting stations on the polling day of the 2019 District Council Ordinary Election may be attributed to the public's insufficient knowledge of the determination of validity of questionable ballot papers, apart from the established practice of displaying samples of clearly valid, invalid and questionable ballot papers inside the counting zone for reference by the PROs, candidates, election agents and counting agents, those samples will also be displayed in the public area of the counting stations in order to enhance the public's knowledge in this aspect.

Regarding the suggestion of adopting an electronic mode of ballot papers distribution, i.e. making use of electronic poll registers to verify the identity of electors and distribute ballot papers in the polling stations, the spokesman pointed out that launching of electronic poll registers involves various procedures including tendering, amending relevant legislations, repeated validation and system testing. It is not feasible to apply the electronic mode of ballot papers distribution in the Legislation Council General Election to be held this September in terms of time, legislative procedures and technical aspect.

As far as the technical aspect is concerned, since the system will process personal data of more than four million electors, stringent security measures should be in place to prevent accidental data leakage. Before its implementation, the system must pass information technology (IT) security risk assessment and audit to earn public confidence. A stable and reliable system is of paramount importance to avoid any possible errors on the polling day.

"In fact, the Government has all long been actively studying the electronisation of different electoral procedures. However, any arrangement must strike a balance between the application of IT, efficiency, security risks, privacy protection and public confidence, etc. The REO plans to implement electronic poll registers in the 2021 Election Committee Subsector Elections and will continue to actively study the introduction of different technologies in public elections to improve the electoral process and efficiency," the spokesman added.

The EAC also received some representations during the consultation period expressing concerns over the definition of "candidate" mentioned in Chapter 16 of the proposed guidelines on Election Expenses and Election Donations. The definition of "candidate" is stipulated clearly in the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance (ECICO). "Candidate": (1) means a person who stands nominated as a candidate at an election; and (2) also means a person who, at any time before the close of nominations for an election, has publicly declared an intention to stand as a candidate at the

election.

The spokesman reiterated that the definition of "candidate" in Chapter 16 follows what is stipulated in the ECICO and had all along been set out in the election guidelines released by the EAC in the past. The EAC has no intention or authority to change that definition. Besides, the ECICO also clearly sets out provisions regulating election expenses and prescribes the maximum amount of election expenses. It also requires candidates to submit election returns setting out all election expenses and election donations, in order to ensure that the candidates do compete on a level playing field and within a reasonable level of expenditures. The EAC has the responsibility to remind those who intend to run for elections of the requirements in relevant laws, especially when a court case setting out some objective criteria for election expenses is available for reference, in order to avoid them from breaking the law inadvertently.

The spokesman urged those who intend to run for the election to read carefully the guidelines and the relevant electoral legislation, and strictly abide by the relevant legislation and guidelines. The guidelines can be downloaded from the EAC's website (www.eac.hk). They are also available for viewing at the Registration and Electoral Office and the Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of District Offices.

Latest arrangements for LCSD public services

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) announced today (June 17) that, in view of the latest situation of COVID-19, more leisure and cultural facilities and venues will reopen.

Among the leisure venues, the following non-fee-charging leisure facilities will reopen from June 20. They are outdoor soccer pitches, cricket grounds, basketball courts, volleyball courts, handball courts, netball courts, a roller hockey court and gateball courts. Siu Sai Wan Swimming Pool on Hong Kong Island and Morse Park Swimming Pool in Kowloon will reopen on the same day. Details of the reopened swimming pools are at www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/beach/common/documents/reopen_annex1_622.pdf. For details of facilities in swimming pools to be reopened, please refer to notices displayed at the venues. The reopened swimming pools will operate from 6.30am to 10pm for three sessions daily with two breaks.

The following fee-charging leisure facilities will reopen from June 22: grass soccer pitches, baseball courts, rugby pitches, cricket grounds, hockey grounds, basketball courts, volleyball courts, netball courts, the Sanshou Training Hall at Lei Yue Mun Sports Centre and the contact sports centre at

Pei Ho Street Sports Centre. Besides, outdoor non-fee-charging children's playgrounds and road safety towns will also reopen. Please refer to www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/common/pdf/reopening_of_facilities_phase2_pdf1_en.pdf for details of the land facilities to be reopened.

Members of the public can book the reopened fee charging land leisure facilities via the Internet Booking Service of Leisure Link, Leisure Link Booking Office of the reopened facilities, Leisure Link Booking Office of the District Leisure Services Offices and Self-service Kiosks starting from June 20.

The opening arrangement of bowling greens, golf driving range, sports climbing facilities and craft hiring in water sports centres will resume normal from June 22. The limit on the number of users in dance rooms/activity rooms will also be relaxed.

Acceptance of booking applications for use of the reopened land recreation and sports facilities, indoor multi-purpose arenas and sports grounds (for athletics training only) in September or afterward will resume starting from July 1. Please refer to www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/common/pdf/reopening_of_facilities_phase2_pdf2_en.pdf for the booking arrangements.

The LCSD appeals to venue users to comply with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap 599G) on the prohibition of group gatherings of more than the number of people as stipulated by the law. The LCSD will adopt special measures at leisure facilities to be reopened. Measures include stepping up cleansing work, arranging body temperature screening for all people entering indoor venues, limiting the use of facilities and the numbers of users at venues and closing spectator stands.

Regarding cultural venues, all of the LCSD's performance venues will be opened for performances or activities with live audiences from June 19 with special seating arrangements. The number of audience in major facilities of the venues such as concert halls, theatres, auditoriums, cultural activities halls and arenas will be limited to half of the original capacity. Consecutive seats will be limited to 16 and alternate rows will be taken where practicable. For activities to be held in minor facilities such as rehearsal rooms, music/dance studios and lecture/function/conference rooms, no more than 16 consecutive seats in a cluster may be occupied with appropriate distance maintained between groups. The number of users in minor facilities will be limited to half of the original capacity in most cases. For details please refer to the notifications of individual venues. Audiences will need to wear their own masks in the venues. All speech day events and hiring activities open to the public at outdoor facilities will remain suspended. Box offices at LCSD's performance venues will continue operating at special opening hours (from noon to 6:30pm daily or 30 minutes after commencement of URBIX performance at the venue). Ticket dispensing machines will be operated during the opening hours of the respective venues.

All reopened museums and cultural venues, except the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum, will resume normal opening hours on June 22 and current arrangement of admission by sessions will be cancelled. Visitors will be able to enter these museums on a first-come, first-served basis and visitors flow will be limited in the museums. Children facilities in the museums will remain closed. The Science Museum and Space Museum will continue to arrange visits by sessions, each lasting two hours, with admission quota to limit visitor flow. Special opening hours will apply (except on regular closing days, the Science Museum will be open from 10am to 5pm while the Space Museum will be open from 12.30pm to 5pm).

Public programmes at the museums and cultural venues, including the Cinema of the Hong Kong Film Archive, will resume gradually. The limitation on the number of users and special seating arrangement adopted in the above-mentioned performance venues will also apply. The Lecture Hall of Science Museum is under maintenance and is expected to be reopened in September. For related details, please visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/facilities/facilitieslist/museums/lcsdmuseums.html.

Except Lek Yuen Public Library, all other 31 small libraries will be reopened on June 22 and implement special opening hours. Please visit the public libraries website for details on their respective opening hours (www.hkpl.gov.hk/en/index.html). To avoid people gathering, the libraries will arrange admission by sessions, with each session lasting about one to two hours. Crowd control measures will apply to limit visitors flow in the libraries. Lending and returning of library materials and picking up reserved library materials will be offered. Some of the computer facilities will resume service and open for telephone booking. The newspapers and periodicals areas will be reopened with reduced seating capacity. All mobile libraries will resume service on June 29.

As all book drop service, self-service library stations and almost all public libraries have resumed or reopened, patrons should return their overdue items as soon as possible. The counting of overdue fines shall be resumed from July 20.

Visitors to facilities of the performance venues, museums and libraries will need to use hand sanitiser and will be subject to temperature checks before admission. They are also advised to wear their own masks. Children under 12 will only be allowed to enter exhibition facilities, museums and libraries when accompanied by an adult. Enhanced measures including cleaning and disinfection between sessions will be conducted.

The LCSd will continue to monitor the situation closely and review the arrangements in a timely manner.