

# Subsidy Scheme for Employment Agencies to be introduced under Anti-epidemic Fund

The Labour Department (LD) today (June 2) announced that a Subsidy Scheme for Employment Agencies (EAs) will be introduced under the Anti-epidemic Fund to assist EAs to tide over the difficulties arising from the COVID-19 epidemic.

An LD spokesman said, "The business of EAs has been affected by the COVID-19 epidemic. In particular, the business of EAs that provide foreign domestic helper (FDH) placement services has been greatly affected as some overseas countries have suspended the processing of new and contract renewal applications of FDHs. At the same time, EAs that do not provide FDH placement services have also been affected due to the economic downturn brought about by the COVID-19 epidemic and the worsening unemployment situation in Hong Kong. In view of the above, the Anti-epidemic Fund Steering Committee endorsed on May 29 a proposal to provide a one-off subsidy to EAs to help them tide over this difficult time."

Under the Scheme, a one-off lump sum subsidy will be granted to EAs with a valid licence issued by the LD. A subsidy of \$50,000 will be granted for each main licence of an EA which provides FDH placement services. For EAs which do not provide FDH placement services, a subsidy of \$30,000 will be granted for each main licence. An additional subsidy of \$10,000 will be granted for each duplicate licence for a branch office of both kinds of EA.

The Scheme will be open for application in the second half of June 2020. All EAs holding a valid EA licence or having submitted an application for licence renewal in accordance with the Employment Agency Regulations (Cap. 57A) as at May 31, 2020 will be eligible for applying for the subsidy. EAs applying for a subsidy of \$50,000 will be required to declare that they had provided FDH placement services on or before May 31, 2020, and may be required to submit documentary proof as necessary. Application details and guidelines will be announced in a press release and uploaded to the LD's Employment Agencies Portal ([www.eaa.labour.gov.hk](http://www.eaa.labour.gov.hk)).

For enquiries about the Scheme, please contact the Employment Agencies Administration of the LD at 2115 3667.

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## LCSD provides ex-gratia payment to

## personnel affected by cancellation of programmes

A spokesman for the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) said today (June 2) that ex-gratia payment is being made to personnel engaged in recreation and sports programmes organised or subvented by the LCSD, including coaches and instructors, to relieve the impact of the pandemic. The ex-gratia payment is being offered to those directly engaged by the LCSD, or sports coaches and staff hired by National Sports Associations (NSAs) or sports organisations (SOs) subvented under the Sports Subvention Scheme, or sports coaches from NSAs or SOs who were engaged by the LCSD through the Direct Purchase Authority Management System to provide services. The ex-gratia payment is equivalent to the amount of their original remuneration for cancelled programmes scheduled to commence or to be held from January 29 to March 31.

Coaches and personnel benefiting from this subsidy scheme are not required to submit applications. The LCSD will release the ex-gratia payment to the personnel directly or through the relevant NSAs and SOs. Disbursement of the ex-gratia payment began in May and is being carried out in batches.

In addition, the LCSD will make the same arrangement and provide ex-gratia payment to instructors and speakers of seminars, workshops and training courses organised by the Hong Kong Public Libraries and the Music Office whose programmes were cancelled and could not be rescheduled due to venue closure, school suspension or the pandemic.

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## Man sentenced for breaching compulsory quarantine order

A 43-year-old man was sentenced to immediate imprisonment for three weeks by the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (June 2) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C).

The man was earlier issued a compulsory quarantine order stating that he must conduct quarantine at a designated hotel in Central for 14 days. When the Police were deployed at the scene on May 20, he was found to have left the place of quarantine and taken off his electronic wristband without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer before the expiry of the quarantine order. He was charged with contravening sections 8(1), 8(4) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was sentenced by the Eastern

Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for three weeks.

A spokesman for the Department of Health (DH) said the sentence sends a clear message to the community that breaching a quarantine order is a criminal offence and that the Government will not tolerate such actions. The spokesman reiterated that compliance with quarantine orders is of paramount importance in Hong Kong's fight against COVID-19.

Pursuant to the Regulation, save for exempted persons, all persons who have stayed in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan in the 14 days preceding arrival in Hong Kong, regardless of their nationality or travel documents, will be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Moreover, pursuant to the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E), starting from March 19, all persons arriving from countries or territories outside China would also be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Breaching a quarantine order is a criminal offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months. The DH solemnly reminds persons under quarantine to comply with the statutory requirements and conduct quarantine for 14 days.

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## Manager of unlicensed guesthouse fined

A woman was fined \$6,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (June 2) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in August last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected a suspected unlicensed guesthouse on Wing On Street in Peng Chau. During the inspection, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in the guesthouse on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, the guesthouse did not possess a licence under the Ordinance on the day of inspection. The woman responsible for managing the premises was charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and can lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email ([hadlaeng@had.gov.hk](mailto:hadlaeng@had.gov.hk)), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website ([www.hadla.gov.hk](http://www.hadla.gov.hk)), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

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## Manager and operator fined for illegal club operation

Two men were each fined \$4,300 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (June 2) for contravening the Clubs (Safety of Premises) Ordinance.

The courts heard that in October last year, officers from the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) of the Home Affairs Department conducted an inspection at a club on Elgin Street in Central, which had been operating with a certificate of compliance (CoC).

During the investigation, the OLA officers posed as customers and patronised the club for food and drinks without being asked to show their membership status or being invited to join the club as members. Also, the club's staff failed to show the registered drawing upon the OLA officers' request. Conditions 10 and 12 of the CoC were breached.

The two men, being the manager of the club and the CoC holder of the club, were charged with contravening section 21(1) (a) and section 21(2) of the Ordinance respectively.

A spokesman for the department reminded all CoC holders to comply with the conditions as stipulated therein. Enforcement actions will continue to be taken against illegal club operations.