

Amendments to subsidiary legislation under Buildings Ordinance gazetted

Amendments to the subsidiary legislations of the Buildings Ordinance (BO), viz. the Building (Minor Works) (Amendment) Regulation 2020 (Amendment Regulation) and the Building (Planning) (Amendment) Regulation 2020 (B(P)(A)R), were gazetted today (May 8).

The Amendment Regulation aims to respond to the increasing demand from the public to extend the scope of the Minor Works Control System (MWCS) to include more small-scale building works so as to bring greater convenience to the public and facilitation to the industry.

The MWCS, which has come into full operation since late 2010, provides a simple channel to members of the public in carrying out small-scale building works. Before its implementation, all building works, unless those exempted from the BO by virtue of section 41 of the BO, required prior approval and consent of the Buildings Department (BD) before commencement. With the MWCS, building owners may carry out specified minor works under simplified requirements without the need to obtain prior approval and consent from the BD.

Under the Amendment Regulation, the numbers of minor works (MW) items and designated exempted works items will increase from 126 to 187 and from 15 to 30 respectively. These items mainly include:

- * installation of greening features which promote a green and quality built environment such as planters, ponds, fountains, trellises and metal frames for growing of plants;
- * various amenity features which improve the standard and quality of a building such as retractable awnings, supporting structures and metal casings for building services installations and wind guards;
- * repair or replacement of curtain walls and installation of features facilitating building maintenance such as small-sized reinforced polyester water tanks and cat ladders for maintenance purposes; and
- * small-scale building works to expedite building repair and maintenance works and in turn facilitate business operations.

Furthermore, a new Type H of MW has been added in the Amendment Regulation for carrying out small-scale works relating to the ventilation system inside a building by Prescribed Registered Contractors.

The Amendment Regulation also provides for transitional arrangements to enable registered minor works contractors (RMWC) to continue the MW that have commenced before the commencement of the Amendment Regulation to avoid undue disruption. Suitable transitional arrangements are also put in place to avoid

bringing inconvenience to existing RMWCs.

The B(P)(A)R is consequential in nature and provides four new types of features, permitting them to project over the street subject to their meeting of certain dimensional and positional requirements.

Relevant stakeholders of the industry including various building professional institutions have been consulted and are generally supportive of the amendment.

The BD will launch public education and publicity programmes for practitioners, property management agencies and the public on the relevant amendments. The BD will also update the relevant guidelines and mobile application, and publish a series of pamphlets to enable the industry and the public to better understand the relevant requirements.

The amendment will be tabled at the Legislative Council for negative vetting on May 13 with a view to coming into operation on September 1, 2020, to allow sufficient time for stakeholders and the public to become familiarised with the changes.

The People's Bank of China will issue Renminbi Bills through the Central Moneymarkets Unit of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority

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

The People's Bank of China (the "PBOC") will issue Renminbi Bills through the Central Moneymarkets Unit of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (the "HKMA"). Please find attached the tender notice and the tender information memorandum of the Renminbi Bills to be issued by the PBOC. Please also find attached the tender-related information provided by the Issuing and Lodging Agent through the HKMA.

Land and Development Advisory

Committee holds meeting

At its meeting today (May 7), the Land and Development Advisory Committee was briefed by the Development Bureau on the major recommendations of the Planning and Urban Design Review for Developments at Kai Tak Runway Tip (KTRT) and the proposed two-envelope tender arrangement for disposal of Site 3 of the New Central Harbourfront (Site 3).

Members noted the planning objectives, design principles and key study recommendations for the developments at KTRT, including the existing and planned public open spaces (such as the Kai Tak Runway Park and Runway Waterfront Promenade) as well as the Tourism Node site included in the 2020-21 Land Sale Programme. The study envisaged that the KTRT developments should be taken forward under a planning and design framework which embodied various elements including connectivity, healthy city concept, harbourfront enhancement and aviation and water themes. Members were briefed on the Master Layout Plan and Landscape Master Plan drawn up for the area, as well as the implementation arrangements. Members generally supported the recommendations of the KTRT Study as a set of well thought-out designs for a prime urban location, and provided comments on various aspects, such as ways to attract people to KTRT, the connectivity to and within the area, the promotion of healthy city and kid-friendly concepts, and the future operation, management and maintenance of various public open spaces and recreational facilities in KTRT to ensure full implementation of the design concepts.

For Site 3, members were briefed on the two-envelope tender approach, i.e. evaluation of both design and price proposals. With a total area of 4.75 hectares, the design concept of Site 3 was formulated under the Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront completed in 2011, following two stages of extensive public engagement. The planning brief for the site prescribes a commercial development in separate blocks mainly for office and retail, with a total gross floor area not exceeding 150 000 sq m, to be built alongside a spacious public open space of no less than 25 000 sq m to be opened round-the-clock. There will be a continuous landscaped deck spanning across the site in a north-south direction, allowing visitors to walk all the way from the hinterland of the Central Business District to the harbourfront. Given the prime harbourfront location of Site 3 in the heart of Central and its proposed mixed use development of such a scale benefitting Hong Kong economically and socially, the Government hoped to take full advantage of this opportunity to put developable space of the site into good use, by providing maximum possible commercial floor space to address the city's strong demand for prime Grade A offices, and at the same time responding to public aspiration for a world class harbourfront with quality public open space and pedestrian-oriented connectivity.

While noting that the two-envelope approach was rather unconventional for government land sale, members welcomed the adoption of this approach for Site 3 as a commendable and right step, which allows the Government to select a tender that best combined design quality and premium offer, signifying that the Government attaches as much value to design merits and social benefits as

to fiscal return from land sale for this unique site. In particular, members agreed that the use of a two-envelope approach would allow both quality and price considerations to be taken into account, and the setting of a reserve price would ensure reasonable protection to public revenue. Specific suggestions put forth by members included how best to ensure transparency of the tender assessment criteria, the handling and control of any post-tender design changes while ensuring fairness of the evaluation process, and the formulation of suitable marking standards and arrangements to enable selection of a quality, innovative and operable scheme.

ITB thanks public support for CuMask+[TM]

The CuMask+™ online registration system had received over 720 000 registrations, covering two million registrants in total on the first day of registration on May 6.

A spokesman for the Innovation and Technology Bureau (ITB) said today (May 7) that two million registrants were recorded on the first day of registration. The response is overwhelming. It is encouraging to see support for local invention.

The spokesman said, "Our thanks go to support from all sides, including the Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel (HKRITA) which has been commissioned to oversee the project, the Crystal International Group Limited which is responsible for the production, the Novetex Textiles Limited in Tai Po Industrial Estate for providing clean room for sterilisation, The Mills and the TAL Apparel Limited for lending premises to set up workshops as well as the frontline workmen for their hard work over the past few months. This unrivalled challenge cannot be met without their joint efforts and the collaboration of the industry and our team."

The ITB commissioned the HKRITA to oversee the CuMask+™ project in order to meet the imminent needs for masks in Hong Kong. The Government Stores and Procurement Regulations do allow direct purchase to be made under extreme urgency. The whole procurement process was conducted in accordance with the Government's procurement regulations and procedures. The ITB had also sought legal advice and confirmed that the conditions under the Agreement on Government Procurement of the World Trade Organization could be met.

In February and March this year, the HKSAR Government contacted various suppliers of reusable masks. However, most reverted that they had either stopped production, did not have enough stock, unable to export materials due to export control, or unable to produce testing certification. The epidemic at that time was serious and the supplies of anti-epidemic items were

becoming scarce. Hong Kong did not have any raw materials or production lines. Taking into account the aggressive procurement actions of anti-epidemic items by different countries, export control and suspension of production lines all over the world, the Government had to consider urgently the feasibility of manufacturing reusable masks that would be up to standard for use by the whole community.

On reviewing the reusable mask developed by the HKRITA, the Government considered that the design of the mask and materials used could meet the requirement. There were supporting certifications proving its compliance with relevant international standards. As for mass production, it depends on the availability of supply of raw materials. Having wide network in the industry, the HKRITA was able to acquire quality raw materials within a short period and put production lines in place. The Government therefore commissioned the HKRITA to oversee the coordination of production through direct purchase with a view to supplying reusable masks to all Hong Kong residents as soon as possible.

The HKRITA is a non-profit-making R&D centre fully subsidised by the Government. Most of their R&D projects are funded by the Innovation and Technology Fund. The HKRITA oversees the CuMask+™ project on a non-profit-making basis. All expenses will be reimbursed to the HKRITA on the basis of actual spending.

Regarding some concerns over the effectiveness of the CuMask+™, members of the public may browse the website www.qmask.gov.hk/report for the testing reports and patent information.

Speedpost service to Singapore suspended

Hongkong Post today (May 7) announced the need to suspend Speedpost service to Singapore from tomorrow (May 8) owing to the substantial reduction in flight frequencies by airlines, which has resulted in a nearly complete inability to provide any air traffic capacity to cope with the volume of Speedpost items conveyed to Singapore. Hongkong Post had previously announced the service suspension of airmail to Singapore on May 4. Members of the public may consider using surface mail for posting items to Singapore as the frequency of the shipping schedule to the destination has been increased to once per week. It is estimated that the journey time for posting through surface mail to Singapore would take about five days.

Destination	Types of services currently available	Estimated journey time for surface mail
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Asia	Singapore	All surface mail postal services	5 days
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Members of the public may visit the Hongkong Post website and refer to the following links for all destinations affected and the latest dates of posting for forthcoming surface despatches:

www.hongkongpost.hk/en/about_us/whats_new/notices/index_id_923.html and
www.hongkongpost.hk/en/preparation/posting/latest_dates/index.html.