

## **Latest arrangements for services of EPD**

To align with the Government's announcement that public services will resume under a phased approach, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) announced today (April 30) that its public services will resume as normal starting from May 4 (Monday). Some EPD facilities will continue to be temporarily closed, and visitor and education programmes will remain suspended.

All public counters of the EPD will resume normal services starting from May 4, including counter services in regional offices and other counter services for licences and other applications. The instant call answering service of the EPD's general customer hotline (2838 3111) will resume and the telephone enquiry services of other registration schemes will also revert to normal operating hours.

Details of the latest arrangements of the above services are available at the EPD website ([www.epd.gov.hk](http://www.epd.gov.hk)).

Regarding facilities, Shuen Wan Restored Landfill – Golf Driving Range will reopen on May 4, while other facilities including visitor centres of EcoPark, T•PARK and WEEE•PARK, Environmental Resource Centres (namely Wan Chai Environmental Resource Centre, Fanling Environmental Resource Centre, Lung Fu Shan Environmental Education Centre and Mobile Environmental Resource Centre), Tseung Kwan O Restored Landfill – Football Training Centre, Gin Drinkers Bay Restored Landfill – BMX Park and Cricket Hong Kong Centre will remain temporarily closed until further notice.

All Community Green Stations remain open to collect recyclables and the counters will resume normal services, while visitor and education programmes will continue to be temporarily suspended until further notice.

---

## **Latest implementation progress of Arts and Culture Sector Subsidy Scheme under Anti-epidemic Fund**

A spokesperson for the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) said today (April 30) that the \$150 million Arts and Culture Sector Subsidy Scheme, which was established under the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF) to assist the arts and culture sector to sail through the difficulties arising from COVID-19, has disbursed

about \$100 million so far to relevant organisations to assist various arts groups and freelance arts workers.

Since March, the HAB has dispersed over \$50 million subsidies to nine major performing arts groups, 14 venue partners of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, 33 grantees of the Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme of the HAB, the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society and the Hong Kong Maritime Museum. These arts groups will make use of the subsidies to pay the salaries of their staff, contractors and freelance workers as much as possible.

Under the Arts and Culture Sector Subsidy Scheme, the HAB has entrusted the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) to implement the Support Scheme for Arts and Cultural Sector (Support Scheme) totalling \$50 million, covering performances and activities affected by the epidemic from January 29 to June 30, 2020. In addition to the continued provision of approved year grants and project grants, the HKADC has dispersed an additional \$80,000 subsidy to each of the 42 organisations receiving grants from the HKADC and \$15,000 subsidy to each of the 203 projects funded/activities commissioned by the HKADC in March. The HKADC has also advised these arts groups to make use of the subsidies to pay the salaries of their staff, contractors and freelance workers as much as possible. As to arts projects not funded by the HKADC and freelancers, they are also covered by the Support Scheme. The HKADC has received applications from more than 340 relevant projects and about 2 000 freelancers. The HKADC will approve the subsidies to eligible applicants as soon as possible. Apart from salaries from the arts groups which engaged them for a project, arts and culture freelancers may also apply for up to \$7,500 subsidies from the HKADC for other arts and culture jobs affected by the epidemic.

Under the second phase of the AEF, if arts and culture freelancers have taught any interest class in a school or a subvented non-governmental organisation, they may apply for \$7,500 subsidy under the second phase of the AEF from the Education Bureau or Social Welfare Department (however, an applicant may only make application to one department and cannot receive subsidy from both departments). In addition, if the relevant individual has made contribution to the Mandatory Provident Fund as a self-employed person in 2019, he may also apply for the one-off \$7,500 subsidy under the Employment Support Scheme. We hope the measures above may assist arts and culture freelancers to tackle the difficulties.

The HAB also pays the full rent for tenants of arts spaces under the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre and the HKADC from February to April 2020 and provides 75 per cent off rental reduction for them from May to September. About 200 arts space tenants will benefit from the measures involving about \$10 million.

The HAB has engaged the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong (Barwo) to collect details of the affected professional Cantonese opera performances in the period from January 29 to April 30, and disburse the subsidies to the practitioners of various categories involved in the performances. These

practitioners include actors/actresses, martial artists and musicians as well as staff responsible for the sets, costumes, transportation and administration, etc. While most of them are freelancers, both members and non-members of Barwo are included. The principle of subsidisation under the scheme is to help mainly the frontline and low-income practitioners, under which frontline staff enjoys a higher percentage of the subsidy. From January 29 to April 30, around 200 professional Cantonese opera performances have been cancelled, affecting around 700 practitioners. The total amount of subsidies is \$8.3 million. Since April 23, Barwo has started to disburse the subsidies to the Cantonese opera practitioners. The HAB is in discussion with Barwo about covering the performances scheduled for May and June in the scheme as well.

---

## [Yellow fire danger warning](#)

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Yellow fire danger warning

The fire danger situation today (April 30) is yellow and the risk of fire is high. People are urged to prevent fires breaking out and hikers should also be vigilant.

---

## [Joint operation by Hong Kong Customs and Department of Health to combat illegal sale of nicotine-containing oil for electronic cigarettes \(with photo\)](#)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs and the Department of Health (DH) yesterday (April 28) conducted a joint operation codenamed "Whirlwind" in Wan Chai, Kwun Tong, Mong Kok, Sham Shui Po, Tsuen Wan and Yuen Long to combat illegal sale of nicotine-containing oil for electronic cigarettes and seized about 50 000 pieces of suspected nicotine-containing oil for electronic cigarettes with an estimated market value of about 2.38 million.

Customs earlier received information alleging that some retail shops of

alternative smoking products are suspected to be engaged in illegal activities. Investigation revealed that some retail shops using the sale of uncontrolled products such as heating devices and accessories of electronic cigarettes as a camouflage, so they could sell nicotine-containing oil for electronic cigarettes surreptitiously.

Customs and the DH then conducted a joint operation yesterday and raided various retail shops of alternative smoking products in Wan Chai, Kwun Tong, Mong Kok, Sham Shui Po, Tsuen Wan and Yuen Long. As a result, the batch of suspected nicotine-containing oil for electronic cigarettes was seized from 15 shops.

During the operation, Customs officers arrested ten men and ten women, aged between 20 and 41, including shop proprietors and salespersons.

Investigations by Customs and the DH are ongoing. The suspected nicotine-containing oil for electronic cigarettes seized will be sent to the Government Laboratory for examination.

According to the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, nicotine-containing electronic cigarette products are classified as pharmaceutical products requiring registration with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong before they can be sold in Hong Kong. In addition, nicotine is a Part 1 poison which can only be sold at pharmacies under the supervision of a registered pharmacist. Illegal sale and possession of Part 1 poisons and unregistered pharmaceutical products are criminal offences. The maximum penalty for each offence is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected illegal sale of alternative smoking products to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).

Members of the public may also call the DH at 2572 2068 for further enquiries relating to pharmaceutical products and medicines.



# Fitness Centre Subsidy Scheme open for applications

The Fitness Centre Subsidy Scheme (the Scheme), which is launched by the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) under the second phase of the Anti-epidemic Fund, will be open for applications from May 4 to June 3.

The Scheme aims to provide a one-off subsidy of \$100,000 to each eligible fitness centre to tide businesses over the financial difficulties arising from its closure pursuant to the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (the Regulation)(Cap. 599F).

The application details of the Scheme are available on the website of the HAB ([www.hab.gov.hk/en/aef\\_fitness\\_centre\\_subsidy\\_scheme](http://www.hab.gov.hk/en/aef_fitness_centre_subsidy_scheme)). The application form and guidelines can be downloaded from the website.

Applications will be processed concurrently during the application period and will be assessed on the basis of all the information provided. To avoid delays in processing, applicants should ensure the accuracy of the information submitted.

The HAB has commissioned the Physical Fitness Association of Hong Kong, China to assist in implementing the Scheme. For enquiries concerning the Scheme and the application procedure, please call 2302 9089 or email to [subsidy@hkpfa.org.hk](mailto:subsidy@hkpfa.org.hk).

According to the Regulation, fitness centres refer to all premises that provide exercise machines or equipment for use and/or provide advice, instruction, training or assistance (including bodybuilding, dancing, yoga, pilates or body stretching and martial arts) on improving physical fitness.