

Police prohibit public meetings and object to public procession intended to be held on Hong Kong Island on May 1

Police were notified by an organisation of its intention to hold two public meetings and a public procession on Hong Kong Island on May 1.

Upon risk assessment, Police regarded that the public meetings and procession are high-risk activities with crowd gatherings. Police have grounds to believe that the activities do not only increase the risk of infecting COVID-19 by participants and other people, but also pose serious threat to the lives and health of all citizens, jeopardizing public safety and affecting the rights of others.

In view of this, Police believed that it is necessary to prohibit the aforesaid public meetings and object to the aforesaid public procession in accordance with section 9(1), 9(2), 14(1) and 14(2) of the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245) ("the Ordinance") for maintaining public order and public safety, and protecting the rights and freedom of others.

Police reminded members of the public that according to section 17A(2) of the Ordinance, where any public meeting or public procession takes place in contravention of section 7 or 13, the public meeting or public procession shall be an unauthorised assembly. According to section 17A(3) of the Ordinance, where any public meeting or public procession is an unauthorised assembly by virtue of section 17A(2)–

(a) every person who, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, knowingly takes or continues to take part in or forms or continues to form part of any such unauthorised assembly; and

(b) every person who–

(i) holds, convenes, organizes, forms or collects, or assists or is concerned in the holding, convening, organizing, forming or collecting of, any public meeting or public procession referred to in subsection (2)(a); or

(ii) continues or attempts to continue to hold or conduct, or to direct otherwise than for the purpose of securing obedience to an order given or issued under section 6 or 17(3), any public gathering such as is referred to in subsection (2)(b), or any public meeting, public procession or public gathering, or other meeting, procession or gathering of persons, referred to in subsection (2)(c),

after the same has become an unauthorised assembly as aforesaid,

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable—

(i) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for 5 years; and

(ii) on summary conviction, to a fine at level 2 and to imprisonment for 3 years.

“Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Property Management Sector (Phase II)” under “Anti-epidemic Fund” open for application today

The Government today (April 24) launched the "Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Property Management Sector (Phase II)" (ASPM (Phase II)) under the "Anti-epidemic Fund" to extend the coverage of the subsidies to industrial buildings and commercial buildings (including shopping malls).

With the development of the epidemic situation, frontline property management (PM) workers assisting in cleansing and security work in industrial or commercial buildings have also been facing greater public health challenges, and their workload has significantly increased. In view of this, the Government launched the ASPM (Phase II), which aims to provide financial support to frontline PM workers (i.e. workers assisting in cleansing and security work) serving industrial or commercial buildings. Taking into account the special features of industrial and commercial buildings (such as more common areas and facilities therein), when calculating the amount of subsidies, each industrial or commercial building block will be considered equivalent to two private residential building blocks. With the launching of the ASPM (Phase II), the Government wishes to improve frontline PM workers' personal protection and environmental hygiene, and give recognition to their services. Subsidy will also be provided under the ASPM (Phase II) to the owners' organisations (OOs) or PM companies of these buildings so as to alleviate the additional costs arising from heightened cleansing efforts and the burden on the owners and tenants.

The ASPM (Phase II) will provide the following support for industrial and commercial buildings –

(a) "Anti-epidemic Hardship Allowance" – to subsidise eligible PM companies/OOs to give each frontline PM worker a monthly "Anti-epidemic Hardship Allowance" of \$1,000 for four months. Each eligible industrial and commercial building block will be subject to a funding cap double of the cap (6 headcounts) for each private residential building block; and

(b) "Anti-epidemic Cleansing Subsidy" – to give eligible PM companies/00s a lump sum "Anti-epidemic Cleansing Subsidy" for each eligible industrial or commercial building block. The amount of the subsidy will be double of subsidy (\$2,000) for each private residential building block.

The application deadline for the ASPM (Phase II) is June 15. Eligible PM companies and 00s are reminded to submit their applications to the Property Management Services Authority (PMSA) as soon as practicable. For details on the ASPM, please contact the PMSA at 3696 1156 or 3696 1166, or visit the website of the PMSA (www.pmsahk.org.hk/en/index.html).

Mortgage principal moratorium plan extended to Subsidised Sale Flats Scheme

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

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) issued a letter today (April 24) to banks and financial institutions participating in the provision of mortgage loans for the Subsidised Sale Flats Scheme (SSFS) (participating financial institutions), confirming and agreeing that participating financial institutions may offer a mortgage principal moratorium plan to SSFS flats mortgagors. Repayment of the principal may be deferred for a maximum period of 12 months (the moratorium period) and the repayment period of the mortgage loan may be extended correspondingly by a maximum of 12 months. The principal moratorium period may commence by December 31, 2020, at the latest.

The above arrangement is applicable to the SSFS (including the Home Ownership Scheme, the Private Sector Participation Scheme, the Buy or Rent Option Scheme, the Tenants Purchase Scheme and the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme) in the primary market and under the Secondary Market Scheme.

"To encourage participating financial institutions to provide mortgage loans and better mortgage terms for purchasers of SSFS flats, the HA provides a mortgage default guarantee for them (i.e. the HA undertakes to meet the shortfall in repayment in the event of default by the borrowers under specified circumstances during the mortgage default guarantee period). The Deed of Guarantee contains requirements on the mortgage loan period and the monthly instalment amount. Owing to these requirements, participating financial institutions may not be able to offer a mortgage principal moratorium plan to owners of SSFS flats," a spokesman for the HA said.

"In light of the economic downturn arising from the outbreak of

COVID-19, to reduce the burden of mortgage repayment by owners of SSFS flats, the HA confirmed today that a mortgage principal moratorium plan is applicable for SSFS flats so as to encourage participating financial institutions to offer such a plan to owners of SSFS flats," the spokesman said.

Meetings of Legislative Council and its Committees

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

Details of the meetings of the Legislative Council (LegCo) and its Committees to be held in the LegCo Complex during the week from April 27 to May 1 are available in the meeting schedule attached.

The information in the meeting schedule is subject to change. Please refer to the "LegCo Calendar" on the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk) for the latest details of meetings.

Members of the public can watch or listen to the meetings via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website. To observe the proceedings of the meetings at the LegCo Complex, members of the public may call 3919 3399 during office hours to reserve seats.

Production line quota under Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme fully allocated

The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau announced today (April 24) that it has approved the remaining seven production lines (involving six applications, see Annex for details) under the Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme. Given the approval of 13 production lines earlier, the quota of 20 production lines under the Scheme has been fully allocated.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, said, "The Government launched the Scheme under the Anti-epidemic Fund to facilitate local production of masks in order to stabilise supply and to

build up stock to meet the needs of the Government and the community. The Scheme opened for applications on March 2, and the production line quota has been allocated in less than two months. We are also pleased to see the positive response and the Scheme has attracted many manufacturers to produce masks locally under the Scheme.

"The Scheme has reached a significant milestone, and we have, through the Hong Kong Productivity Council, provided all approved applicants with a copy of the funding agreement and will sign the agreement with individual companies successively. Meanwhile, most of the approved applicants are obtaining certification for the masks produced in order to commence supply to the Government as soon as possible."

Among the approved applicants, the Hong Kong Productivity Council has confirmed that two companies have just obtained laboratory reports from accredited laboratories certifying that the masks they respectively produce comply with the ASTM F2100 Level 1 standard. Once the Government signs the funding agreements with these companies and has confirmed that they meet other relevant requirements, they are expected to gradually supply masks to the Government from May.

Other approved production lines will successively commence full production and supply the Government later. The target production and supply dates of some of the applicants are delayed because, owing to the global shortage of masks, enterprises in many places have flocked to establish mask production facilities and have recently sent their mask samples to accredited laboratories outside Hong Kong for certification, resulting in a longer-than-normal lead time for certification. Taking these objective circumstances into consideration, in accordance with the application guide, the Government will allow those approved applicants who are still waiting for such certification and are unable to begin supplying masks to the Government by the target commencement date to apply for an extension of up to one month.

According to the Scheme, after the masks produced by a subsidised production line have obtained the relevant certification, the production line must supply 2 million masks to the Government each month before it could sell the excess to the local market, and the masks must not be exported. During the entire term of the agreement, the fact that the Government has provided a subsidy should not be used to solicit business in any way.

On the supply of children's masks, Mr Yau said, "There exists a need for children's masks within the Government, such as in the Education Bureau and the Department of Health. As such, among the 20 approved production lines, the Government will invite the five applicants approved for two production lines to submit proposals on dedicating their second production line to manufacture masks for children. The Government will designate one production line for children's masks based on factors including the production capacity, the date of supply and the price proposed by the companies concerned. The other 19 subsidised production lines will continue to produce masks for adults."

The Government estimates that, when all the 20 subsidised lines are in full production, every month they will collectively supply 34.55 million masks to the Government and supply a further 8.15 million to the local market.