

Communications Authority press release

The following is issued on behalf of the Communications Authority:

This press release summarises the decisions of the Communications Authority (CA) following its 99th meeting held in September 2020:

CA approves additional frequency allocations in Hong Kong to implement decisions of World Radiocommunication Conference 2019

The CA approved the additional frequency allocations in Hong Kong that will take effect from January 1, 2021.

The World Radiocommunication Conference 2019 (WRC-19) of the International Telecommunication Union held at the end of 2019 identified, among others, the 24.25 – 27.5 GHz, 37 – 43.5 GHz and 66 – 71 GHz frequency bands for use of the fifth generation mobile (5G) services globally. While Hong Kong has already made use of the 24.25 – 27.5 GHz band for provision of 5G services, the CA's additional frequency allocations for the 37 – 43.5 GHz and 66 – 71 GHz bands pave the way for using them in Hong Kong to support 5G and other advanced wireless telecommunications applications in the future. The Office of the Communications Authority will update the Hong Kong Table of Frequency Allocations in January 2021 to align with the WRC-19 decisions.

CA relaxes regulations governing real property advertisements, insertion of advertising materials in programmes covering sports and live events and broadcast hours of mature programmes

Taking into account the views received in an earlier public consultation exercise, the CA announces its decision to revise the relevant provisions of the Television and Radio Codes of Practice on Programme and Advertising Standards (Codes of Practice). The revisions are to relax the regulations of real property advertisements, sponsorship of live and related sports events programmes and broadcast hours of mature programmes. In gist:

(a) Real property advertisements: Advertisements of real properties already regulated under other regimes will be exempted from the substantiation requirements under the Codes of Practice. Nevertheless, such advertisements shall continue to be subject to the provisions governing factual accuracy and truthful presentation of information as well as compliance with all applicable laws.

(b) Live and related sports events programmes: Advertising material may be inserted in live and related sports events programmes, subject to certain conditions/restrictions. Advertising material in other live events programmes may be considered for similar relaxations on a case-by-case basis.

(c) Broadcast hours of mature programmes: The start of broadcast hours for

mature programmes on free TV is advanced from 11.30pm to 11pm.

The CA considers that the above relaxations would provide licensees with more flexibility in their business operations without compromising the interests of the audience. The revised Codes of Practice will be published in the Gazette on September 25, 2020, and take effect on the same day. Details of the CA's decisions above are at www.coms-auth.hk/filemanager/en/content_713/appx_20200922_a.pdf. A summary of the views of the public is available on the CA's website (www.coms-auth.hk/filemanager/statement/en/upload/545/Summary_of_Public_Views.pdf).

Broadcast complaints

The CA considered four complaint cases in respect of broadcasters' non-compliance with the Generic Code of Practice on Television Programme Standards (TV Programme Code) and the Radio Code of Practice on Programme Standards (Radio Programme Code):

(a) A complaint against four editions of the television programme "Pentaprism" broadcast on September 4, October 7 and 15, and November 13, 2019, on the RTHK TV 31 and RTHK TV 31A channels of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK). The CA took the view that the complaint in respect of suitable opportunity for response, expression of a sufficiently broad range of views in personal view programmes and right of reply was justified and decided that RTHK should be warned to observe more closely the relevant provisions in the TV Programme Code;

(b) A complaint against the radio programmes "Clear Day Breakfast" and "On a Clear Day" respectively broadcast on July 8, 2019, on CR 1 Channel and on July 8 and August 12, 2019, on CR2 Channel of Hong Kong Commercial Broadcasting Company Limited (CRHK). The CA took the view that the complaint in respect of accuracy, fairness and factual contents of personal view programmes was justified and that CRHK should be strongly advised to observe more closely the relevant provisions in the Radio Programme Code;

(c) Complaints against the television programmes "News Report" broadcast on June 7, 2020, on TVB News Channel of Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB). The CA took the view that the complaints were justified and that TVB should be advised to observe more closely the relevant provisions in the TV Programme Code; and

(d) A complaint against two editions of the television programme "Good Morning Hong Kong" broadcast on October 29 and 30, 2019, on the Jade and TVB News Channels of TVB. The CA took the view that the complaint was justified and that TVB should be advised to observe more closely the relevant provisions in the TV Programme Code.

Details of the above cases are at www.coms-auth.hk/filemanager/en/content_713/appx_20200922_b.pdf.