

Housing Authority to pass on rates concession to tenants

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

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) will pass on the rates concession for the four quarters of 2021-22, as set out in the Budget Speech of the Financial Secretary in February this year, to its domestic and non-domestic tenants starting from April 2021.

"Following approval by the Subsidised Housing Committee of the HA, the apportioned amount of rates concession will be passed on to domestic tenants on a monthly basis over a 12-month period from April 2021 to March 2022 by offsetting an equivalent amount of the monthly rent payable by them, subject to a ceiling of \$1,500 per quarter in the first two quarters and a ceiling of \$1,000 per quarter in the remaining two quarters for each rateable property," a spokesman for the HA said today (March 22). For tenancies that do not cover the entire month, the transfer of the rates concession will be made on a pro-rata basis.

"The rates concession passing-on arrangement will apply to all domestic lettings including interim housing licensees and Comprehensive Social Security Assistance recipients," the spokesman said.

"Similarly, the Commercial Properties Committee (CPC) of the HA approved that the rates concession for the financial year of 2021-22 for the HA's non-domestic properties (excluding car parks) will also be passed on to the non-domestic tenants/licensees on a 'no loss, no gain' principle. Their monthly rates from April 2021 to March 2022 will be waived subject to a ceiling of \$5,000 per quarter in the first two quarters and a ceiling of \$2,000 per quarter in the remaining two quarters for each rateable non-domestic property," the spokesman said.

Also, for the HA's 13 single-operator markets, namely Ching Long, Chun Yeung, Hung Fuk, Kwai Chung, Lei Muk Shue, Mun Tung, On Tai, Ping Yan, Shek Mun, Shui Chuen O, Tin Yan, Yan Tin and Ying Tung, the operators will also pass on the rates concession to their licensees in full.

"Given the small amount of rates concession to individual car park users and the significant administrative costs involved for its distribution to these users, the CPC endorsed the exclusion of car parks from this exercise in line with the arrangements for passing on the rates concession in previous exercises. The rates concession for car parks received by the HA will be invested in enhancing the HA's car park facilities, such as the installation of electric vehicle charging facilities at suitable sites, replacement of energy-efficient lighting to promote environmental protection and upgrading of security systems," the spokesman said.

The maximum total amount of rates concession to be passed on to domestic and non-domestic tenants/licensees by the HA is estimated to be about \$2,376 million and \$61.5 million respectively. They will be individually notified of the detailed arrangements by the Housing Department.