

## HyD's response to media enquiries on hanging of national flags at lamp posts under its purview

In response to media enquiries on the hanging of national flags at the lamp posts under its purview, a spokesman for the Highways Department (HyD) gave the following response today (July 21):

The Government has all along encouraged community organisations and members of the public to celebrate the National Day and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Establishment Day together, and expressed their patriotic feelings that are premised on the respect for the national flag, regional flag and their designs. To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR, the Government has hanged celebratory buntings at the lamp posts in more than 200 main roads in different districts.

Persons or groups who wish to hang flags at the lamp posts under the purview of the HyD (for example, for promotion of activities by private organisations) can file written applications to the HyD and provide related information for the HyD to consider and consult the views of relevant departments having regard to their actual circumstances. In accordance with the Government's current fee-charging principle on cost recovery, the department needs to recover the expenses involving the inspection work carried out by public lighting maintenance contractors during the hanging of flags from the applicants.

In August 2021, the HyD received an application for the first time from a local group for hanging national flags at the lamp posts under the purview of the department to celebrate the National Day. The HyD handled the application according to the established procedures. The application was then approved and the group paid the related administrative fees and inspection fees according to the procedures.

The HyD later received a request for granting discretionary exemption to the above fees. As there is no fee waiver mechanism in the existing vetting and approval procedure, the department has all along followed up the detailed arrangements for the application for fee waiver with relevant departments proactively. The procedure for vetting and approving for the waiver has now been completed. The department will inform the group of the refund arrangement as soon as possible. Also, the department is now collaborating with relevant departments to formulate the detailed arrangements on waiver of related fees in hanging national flags at lamp posts in the future.