

Housing Authority to close its recreational facilities

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

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) announced today (March 27) that, in response to the latest situation of the pandemic, for the sake of maintaining social distancing, the HA will close its outdoor sports/recreational facilities starting from 6pm tomorrow (March 28) until further notice.

The closure will apply to all ball courts, table tennis tables, children's playgrounds and fitness equipment for the elderly.

Reservations for using these facilities after 6pm tomorrow will be cancelled while new bookings will be suspended.

Moreover, all indoor sports/recreational facilities within public housing estates that have been closed earlier will remain closed until further notice.

The HA will closely monitor the situation and review the above arrangements in a timely manner.

Consultation on annual update to the list of Financial Services Providers under the OTC derivatives regulatory regime

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) today (March 27) issued a [joint consultation](#) on the annual update to the list of Financial Services Providers (Note 1) under the over-the-counter (OTC) derivatives clearing regime (Note 2). Eight additional entities are proposed to be included on the list.

Interested parties are invited to submit comments to the HKMA or the SFC by April 28.

The joint consultation paper can be downloaded from the websites of the

[HKMA](#) or the [SFC](#).

Note 1) The list includes entities that meet the following two criteria:

- (i) They belong to a group of companies appearing on the list of global systemically important banks published by the Financial Stability Board, or on the list of dealer groups which undertook to the OTC Derivatives Supervisors Group to work collaboratively with central counterparties, infrastructure providers and global supervisors to continue to make structural improvements to the global OTC derivatives markets; and
- (ii) They are members of the largest central counterparties offering clearing for interest rate swaps in the US, Europe, Japan and Hong Kong.

Note 2) The current clearing regime covers transactions between major dealers where at least one of them is a prescribed person (ie, an authorised institution, an approved money broker or a licensed corporation). Transactions in certain standardised interest rate swaps in G4 currencies (ie, US dollar, Euro, British pound and Japanese yen) and Hong Kong dollar between a prescribed person which has reached the prescribed clearing threshold and another major dealer which is not a prescribed person also have to be centrally cleared. To that end, the concept of Financial Services Providers was introduced to identify such major dealers outside of Hong Kong.

AFCD to close barbecue sites and campsites in country parks starting from 6pm tomorrow

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) announced today (March 27) that, in light of the latest developments of COVID-19 and the need for reducing social contact among members of the public, the country park barbecue sites and campsites will be closed starting from 6pm tomorrow (March 28) for 14 days until 6pm on April 11.

There are currently 163 barbecue sites and 41 campsites under the management of the AFCD, and all of them will be closed starting from 6pm tomorrow. Details of these sites are available in the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk). During the closure of the above facilities, no one should carry out barbecuing or camping activities in country parks. Staff of the AFCD will step up patrols of the sites concerned. Appropriate follow-up action will be taken against any violation of relevant regulations.

The AFCD will continue to closely monitor the situation and review the above arrangement as appropriate. For enquiries, please call 1823. For the latest updates on the facilities in the country parks, members of the public can also visit the "Enjoy Hiking" website (www.hiking.gov.hk).

The AFCD would like to remind visitors to country parks to ensure personal and environmental hygiene and maintain social distancing. Visitors should properly handle used masks and waste and take their litter home.

Town Planning Board Guidelines revised

The Town Planning Board (TPB) today (March 27) promulgated a set of revised Guidelines (TPB PG-No. 13F) for Application for Open Storage (OS) and Port Back-up (PBU) Uses under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance, which takes immediate effect.

The revised Guidelines are the result of a review conducted by the Planning Department on the previous version of the Guidelines (TPB PG-No. 13E) which was promulgated in October 2008.

The Guidelines set out the criteria for assessing planning applications for OS and PBU uses and provide guidance for making such applications. Rural areas in the New Territories covered by statutory plans are classified into four categories under the Guidelines (Category 1 to 4) with the intention to channel OS/PBU uses to specific areas, thereby preventing them from proliferating into the much wider unspoiled rural area. Amendments have been made to the coverage, site classification and assessment criteria of the Guidelines.

Since the last promulgation of the Guidelines, the Board has prepared various new outline zoning plans (OZPs) to provide statutory planning control for different parts of the New Territories. The coverage of the Guidelines has been updated to include all areas covered by rural statutory town plans including these new OZPs involving an addition of about 5 033 hectares of land under 42 OZPs. About 93 per cent and 7 per cent of the newly included areas are classified under Category 4 and Category 3 respectively.

Taking into account the latest planning circumstances, the site classification of land has been reviewed and re-classified to reflect various completed developments and updated zonings of these sites. The re-classification has also made reference to the spatial distribution of the brownfield sites revealed in the "Study on Existing Profile and Operations of Brownfield Sites in the New Territories". To avoid spreading out of OS/PBU uses to environmentally sensitive areas, the Board recognises the need to channelise them to more appropriate locations.

For New Development Areas (NDAs), the existing OS/PBU uses permitted under previous plans or with previous planning permissions are generally allowed to continue until NDA implementation, but new applications for OS/PBU uses would normally be rejected unless under exceptional circumstances.

For applications submitted to reprovision operations affected by Government development projects, the revised Guidelines specify that sympathetic consideration may be given if the concerned site does not fall within the Category 4 area, the reprovisioning has the policy support of the relevant bureau, and there are no adverse departmental comments and local objections, or the concerns could be addressed by approval conditions.

The revised Guidelines (TPB PG-No. 13F) are now available at the Secretariat of the Board at 15/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong (Tel: 2231 4810 or 2231 4835) and the Board's website (www.info.gov.hk/tpb).

Any enquiries on the guidelines may be addressed to the Secretariat of the Board at the above address or by email (tpbpd@pland.gov.hk), or to the Planning Enquiry Counters of the Planning Department (hotline: 2231 5000, email:enquire@pland.gov.hk) at 17/F, North Point Government Offices and 14/F, Sha Tin Government Offices, 1 Sheung Wo Che Road, Sha Tin.

CFS finds Salmonella in sample of pork tongue skewer with mustard sauce

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (March 27) that a sample of pork tongue skewer with mustard sauce was found to contain a pathogen, Salmonella. The CFS is following up on the case.

"Following up on a food complaint, the CFS collected the above-mentioned sample from a food premises in Mong Kok for testing. The test result showed the presence of Salmonella in 25 grams of the sample, exceeding the criterion of the Microbiological Guidelines for Food which states that Salmonella should not be detected in 25g of a ready-to-eat food sample," a CFS spokesman said.

The spokesman said that the CFS notified the premises concerned of the unsatisfactory test result and instructed it to stop selling the food item concerned immediately. The CFS has also provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the person-in-charge and staff of the premises, and requested it to review and improve the food production process and carry out thorough cleaning and disinfection.

"Salmonella infection may cause fever and gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhoea. The effects on infants, young children, the elderly and patients with a weak immune system could be more severe and may even lead to death," the spokesman said.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health.