

# **Ex-gratia payment scheme for phasing out pre-Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles extended for six months**

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) announced today (December 9) a special arrangement of extending the deadline for ex-gratia payment application for phasing out pre-Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles (DCVs) for six months.

The EPD launched an ex-gratia payment scheme for phasing out pre-Euro IV DCVs since 2014 and the scheme has been progressing well. Except some Euro III DCVs, all pre-Euro, Euro I and Euro II DCVs have been phased out.

Given the current economic situation, the Government fully understands the operational difficulties faced by transport trades and some owners of Euro III DCVs might not be able to complete the necessary procedures of scrapping and de-registering their vehicles and submitting their applications for ex-gratia payment by the original deadline of December 31, 2019.

To address the above situation, the Government will introduce a special arrangement to extend the ex-gratia payment application deadline for phasing out Euro III DCVs to June 30, 2020. Approval of the ex-gratia payment is subject to the applicant meeting all other prevailing eligibility criteria and completing all necessary procedures under the ex-gratia payment scheme, and submitting the application for the ex-gratia payment on or before June 30, 2020.

Besides, in accordance with the Air Pollution Control (Air Pollutant Emission)(Controlled Vehicles) Regulation (Cap. 311X), the Government will stop issuing/renewing vehicle licences to Euro III DCVs after December 31, 2019. Euro III DCV owners who need to apply for vehicle licence renewal after the deadline shall apply to EPD for exemption under Section 6 of the Regulation for extending the retirement deadline.

For details of the ex-gratia payment scheme and the above special arrangement, please refer to EPD's website ([www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/prob\\_solutions/Phasing\\_out\\_diesel\\_comm\\_veh.html](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/prob_solutions/Phasing_out_diesel_comm_veh.html)) or contact EPD by calling 2651 1100 or by email to [preEU4dcv@epd.gov.hk](mailto:preEU4dcv@epd.gov.hk).

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## **Red fire danger warning**

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

The fire danger situation today (December 9) is red and fire risk is extreme. The countryside is extremely vulnerable to fire. If you are planning to spend the day in the countryside, please take pre-cooked food for a picnic and take all measures to prevent hill fires. The penalty for lighting fires illegally in the countryside is \$25,000 and a year's imprisonment.

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## Police's response to public event on Hong Kong Island

Police had earlier issued a Letter of No Objection regarding a public event held yesterday (December 8) on Hong Kong Island. Although the event was generally peaceful, acts of breaching public peace happened afterwards. Police express regret over such acts.

Some participants deviated from the approved procession route and occupied part of Gloucester Road and Des Voeux Road Central. After reaching the finishing point of the procession, a group of protestors occupied Pottinger Street and Des Voeux Road Central, some of them even held weapons in hands. In the evening, some rioters spray-painted the exterior walls of the High Court, threw petrol bombs and set fire outside the High Court and the Court of Final Appeal, damaging government properties and seriously challenging the spirit of the rule of law. A group of violent protestors vandalised shops and banks in Causeway Bay and Wan Chai, completely disregarding law and order.

Police are duty bound to maintain public safety and public order. Over the past six months, violent incidents happened in various large-scale protests. The Police Force has always been exercising restraint, tolerance and patience, striving to maintain public order and protect the safety of members of the public. Only when there were violent acts or illegal behaviours which endangered the safety of people at scene, Police would stop them by using the minimum necessary force to prevent the incidents from deteriorating.

Police have all along respected people's rights and freedom to express views and facilitated all peaceful public events. Police appeal to protestors to remain peaceful, rational and non-violent when participating in public events in order to maintain public safety and public order.

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# Government response to procession

In response to the Human Rights Day rally held by an organisation this afternoon (December 8), a spokesman for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government said the following:

The procession today was issued a Letter of No Objection by the Police and participated by a large number of members of the public. It was in general peaceful and orderly. Hong Kong people's freedom of speech, of the press, of publication, of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration are fully protected by the Basic Law, the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance and other legislation. Provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as applied to Hong Kong remain in force. Today's procession as well as the 50 000 public assemblies and processions held in Hong Kong over the past five years are testimony to the freedom of peaceful assembly, of procession, of demonstration and of speech enjoyed by the people.

While today's procession was ongoing, there were still violent and illegal acts, in particular, the vandalism and arson targeting the Court of Final Appeal and the High Court. In a society governed by the rule of law, everyone must respect the courts, judges and their rulings. Any attack and smear against the Judiciary would cause enormous damage to the rule of law in Hong Kong, which is unacceptable to the whole community. The HKSAR Government severely condemns the acts. In addition, some people blocked roads and trashed shops and banks while the procession was ongoing, posing a danger to the peaceful protesters.

Allegations against the Police were raised by some protesters today. We emphasise that it is incumbent upon the Police to maintain public safety and public order. If protest activities are conducted peacefully and orderly in general, as with the procession today, the Police would not need to use any force. However, when unlawful acts take place, the Police must take appropriate actions, including deploying appropriate force to handle and stop the violent acts. While using force and making arrests, the Police must act according to the law, taking account of the situation at the scene, and in an appropriate manner. They must also comply with relevant internal guidelines of the Police. The HKSAR Government does not tolerate any breach of law or offence against discipline by police officers. Anyone who is unsatisfied with the operations of the Police may file complaints according to established procedures.

The HKSAR Government hopes to work together with the whole community to stop the violence, uphold the rule of law, restore social order and find a way out for Hong Kong's deep-seated problems through dialogues.

We appeal to participants who are still gathering after the procession to disperse peacefully as soon as possible.

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# Rioters set fire outside the High Court and the Court of Final Appeal

In the evening today (December 8), rioters spray-painted the exterior walls of the High Court and threw petrol bombs outside the High Court and the Court of Final Appeal, damaging government property and seriously challenging the spirit of the rule of law.

Police appeal to protestors to express their views in a peaceful manner and warn the rioters to stop all illegal acts.

The cases are now classified as "Arson" and will be investigated by District Investigation Team of Central District.