

Tender period for site formation and infrastructure works at Kwu Tung North New Development Area extended

The Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) today (October 18) gazetted a notice to extend the tender period for the contract for Kwu Tung North New Development Area, Remaining Phase: Site Formation and Infrastructure Works (North) (Contract No. ND/2024/02) to noon on November 15.

The CEDD invited tenders for the contract on August 23. The tender period was originally scheduled to expire at noon on November 1. Details of the tender notice are available on the CEDD's website (www.cedd.gov.hk/eng/tender-notice/contracts/tender-notice/index.html).

The CEDD has commissioned AECOM Asia Company Limited to design and supervise the works. For enquiries, please call the company at 3922 9000 during office hours.

Government gazettes amendment regulations to implement electronic vehicle licence initiative and tackle prolonged non-licensed vehicles

The Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulation 2024 (RLV Amendment Regulation), Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2024 (RLV (No. 2) Amendment Regulation) and Motor Vehicles Insurance (Third Party Risks) (Amendment) Regulation 2024 (TPR Amendment Regulation) were gazetted today (October 18).

The Amendment Regulations seek to implement an electronic vehicle licence (eVL) of the Transport Department (TD) by obviating the need of vehicle owners to replace their paper-form vehicle licences on each renewal, to simplify the supporting documents required for vehicle licence (VL) applications; as well as to tighten the vehicle registration and licensing regime by introducing a penalty for taking no action on vehicles unlicensed for two years or more.

A spokesman for the Transport and Logistics Bureau said, "The eVL

initiative will streamline the process for vehicle licence applications and bring greater convenience to vehicle owners. The TD will issue a notice to the vehicle owners containing the new licensed period in lieu of a paper-form VL, so that the vehicle owners will not need to replace the paper-form VL with a new one on each renewal after its first issuance bearing no expiry date. The amendments to the law will also simplify the documents accompanying a VL application by repealing the requirement of presenting the Vehicle Registration Document; whereas online VL applicants will have the option not to present the scanned copy of policy of insurance or security, but providing information (such as name of the vehicle owner, identity document number of the vehicle owner, vehicle registration mark, etc) to be specified by the Commissioner for Transport.

"Moreover, to address at source the issue of improper abandonment of unlicensed vehicles in a public area, amendments will be made to hold vehicle owners responsible for their vehicles on a continuous basis. The registered owners of vehicles unlicensed for two years or more must, within three months of the date of a notice to be issued by the TD, either have the vehicle relicensed, or cancel the registration of the unlicensed vehicle in accordance with the requirement, failing which will constitute an offence," the spokesman added.

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Transport and the Transport Advisory Committee were briefed on the above, and members generally supported and welcomed the proposed arrangements. The Amendment Regulations will be tabled at the LegCo on October 23 for negative vetting. Subject to scrutiny by the LegCo, the RLV Amendment Regulation and TPR Amendment Regulation will be effective from December 30 this year. To allow sufficient time for vehicle owners to take appropriate actions on their unlicensed vehicles, the RLV (No. 2) Amendment Regulation will come into operation on a date to be fixed by notice in the Gazette, tentatively in the fourth quarter of 2025.

EDB announces subsidy amounts for Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme in 2024/25 academic year

The Education Bureau (EDB) announced today (October 18) the subsidy amounts of the means-tested subsidy and the non-means-tested subsidy for the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme (MUSSS).

The subsidy will be disbursed based on the distance between the locations of the institutions and Hong Kong, which will be grouped into three categories. Details of the subsidy rates under the different categories, which are identical to that of last year, are set out in the Annex.

A spokesman for the EDB said that the MUSSS will benefit Hong Kong students pursuing undergraduate studies in 197 designated Mainland institutions, including the 138 institutions participating in the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions for the 2024/25 academic year.

The application period for the MUSSS 2024/25 has closed. The EDB is currently processing the applications with a view to notifying individual applicants of the application results by the first quarter of 2025.

The MUSSS aims to provide appropriate support for Hong Kong students who pursue undergraduate studies on the Mainland and ensure that no students will be deprived of post-secondary education due to financial reasons. The MUSSS comprises means-tested subsidy and non-means-tested subsidy. The subsidy is granted on a yearly basis, and the subsidised period is the normal duration of the undergraduate programme pursued by the student concerned in the designated Mainland institution. Eligible applicants may only receive either a means-tested subsidy or a non-means-tested subsidy in the same academic year.

Waste Disposal (Amendment) Bill 2024 **gazetted today**

The Waste Disposal (Amendment) Bill 2024 (Amendment Bill) was published in the Gazette today (October 18), for implementing the relevant amendments to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Basel Convention) on the control of transboundary movements of electrical and electronic waste (EEW) and their proper management in Hong Kong.

A spokesman for the Environment and Ecology Bureau indicated that the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention adopted the amendments to the Basel Convention in June 2022. The amendments, which will take effect from January 1, 2025, expand the control scope of the Basel Convention from hazardous EEW to all EEW. From then, the export of all EEW may only be allowed if the state of import and state(s) of transit, if any, have given their prior consent. The objective is to ensure EEW undergoing transboundary movement is properly managed in the state of import, thereby protecting the local environment and public health.

The spokesman said, "The amendments to the Basel Convention will enter into force in our country on January 1, 2025, and apply to Hong Kong. Therefore, we shall amend the Waste Disposal Ordinance (Cap. 354) (WDO) to expand the scope of import and export control to cover all EEW under the permit control system, with a view to aligning with national policy and

complying with the requirements under the Basel Convention alongside with our country."

To facilitate the trade to adapt to the new control, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has been actively explaining the implementation details and providing suitable assistance to the trade. Subject to the passage of the Amendment Bill by the Legislative Council (LegCo), a six-month phasing-in period will be put in place once the amendments to the WDO become effective. During the phasing-in period, the EPD will exercise discretion when it handles non-compliance matters. At the same time, the EPD will continue to facilitate trade compliance through further publicity and educational efforts.

The Amendment Bill will be introduced into the LegCo for first and second readings on October 30. The Government will fully complement the work of the LegCo in scrutinising the bill, and hope that the LegCo will support and approve the Amendment Bill. Subject to its passage, the relevant legislative amendments will take effect on January 1, 2025, to align with the effective date of the amendments to the Basel Convention which will be the same date when the country implements the requirement.

Revised Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety to take effect tomorrow

â€‹The revised Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety (CoP) will officially take effect tomorrow (October 19). The CoP was gazetted on April 19 this year, and a grace period of six months was provided to allow the industry to have sufficient time to understand and prepare for the revised requirements.

During this grace period, the Labour Department (LD) has strengthened its publicity and promotion, as well as education and training through various channels to facilitate the industry's better understanding of the content of the CoP. These include disseminating relevant information through the LD website, the "OSH 2.0" mobile application and various mass media. In addition, a new "Work Safety Alert" animation specifically targeting truss-out bamboo scaffolds (TOS) has been produced. Relevant content has also been incorporated into the Mandatory Basic Safety Training Course (Construction Work) (commonly known as the "Green Card") and occupational safety and health (OSH) training courses organised by the LD. The LD has also co-organised with relevant organisations to conduct a series of talks and seminars and launch new television promotional videos to further explain the major revisions of the CoP.

The major revisions of the CoP include enhancing technical requirements for the bracings, putlogs and access and egress of bamboo scaffolds; prohibiting unauthorised alteration of bamboo scaffolding including putlogs; further specifying the requirements of supervising work of competent persons to the bamboo scaffolders who perform erection, addition, alteration or dismantling of bamboo scaffolds and inspection prior to inclement weather; and requiring all workers who perform erection, addition, alteration or dismantling of TOS to hold a valid certificate of "Advanced Level Truss-out Scaffolder Safety Training" or "Intermediate Level Truss-out Scaffolder Safety Training" issued by the Construction Industry Council before performing specified work.

A spokesperson for the LD said, "After the commencement of the revised CoP, the LD will continue to strengthen area patrols in the coming period to combat violations of scaffolding operations in renovation, maintenance, alteration and addition works. The inspection focuses include whether the erection, addition, alteration or dismantling of TOS is conducted under the immediate supervision of a competent person; whether the bamboo scaffolders of TOS hold valid certificates; whether suitable fall protection equipment and systems are provided and properly used by bamboo scaffolders; and the stability of the scaffolding. If any violations of the OSH legislation are detected, stringent enforcement actions will be taken immediately, including issuing suspension notices and improvement notices and initiating prosecutions without prior warning."

Under the general duty provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, employers are obligated to provide safe working environments, plant and system of work for their employees. Those who contravene the relevant provisions with serious circumstances are subject to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for two years.

The revised CoP can be downloaded from the LD website www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/content2_8b.htm. Enquiries about the CoP can be made at 2559 2297.