

## **Return of requisition forms urged**

Rates and/or government rent payers who have received the requisition forms (R1A) issued by the Rating and Valuation Department are reminded to complete and return the forms to the department as soon as possible. They can also complete and return the forms by using the Electronic Submission of Forms service provided at the department's website ([www.rvd.gov.hk](http://www.rvd.gov.hk)).

The department issued about 330 000 R1A forms to rates and/or government rent payers this month to obtain rents and tenancy details for different categories of properties to assist in the determination of rateable values for the next general revaluation.

Anyone having difficulty in completing and returning the forms within the specified period must apply in writing for an extension of time before the end of the stipulated period and should state their reasons.

Anyone who knowingly makes a false statement or refuses to furnish any of the particulars specified in the form commits an offence and will be liable to a maximum fine of \$25,000 or \$10,000 respectively and also a fine equivalent to three times the rates and/or government rent undercharged.

Rates and/or government rent payers are reminded to affix sufficient postage if they return the forms by post to ensure timely and successful postal delivery.

Enquiries on how to complete the form can be made by calling the number printed on the form, or visiting the department at 15/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon. The department's website also provides answers to commonly asked questions on completing the form.

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## **SWD invites eligible elderly to apply for additional vouchers under Second Phase of Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly**

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (August 31) started inviting eligible elderly persons to apply for an additional 1 000 vouchers under the Second Phase of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly.

The SWD will send letters to eligible elderly persons to invite them to join the Scheme. Elderly persons eligible to apply for the vouchers must satisfy the following conditions: (1) having been assessed as moderately or severely impaired under the SWD's Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services; (2) waitlisted for subsidised community care service (CCS) and/or residential care service (RCS) under the Central Waiting List for Subsidised Long Term Care Services for the Elderly with application dates no later than the end of March 2018; and (3) not receiving any kind of RCS or subsidised CCS.

An SWD spokesman said, "The Government's elderly policy direction accords priority to the provision of home care and community care, supplemented by residential care. Funding from the Lotteries Fund was allocated to launch the First Phase and Second Phase of the Scheme in September 2013 and October 2016 respectively, which allowed needy elderly persons to receive community care services under the 'money-following-the-user' funding approach. Government subsidy was provided directly for eligible elderly persons in the form of voucher so that they could choose the service packages which best suit their needs. To enhance community care and support services, the Government will issue an additional 1 000 vouchers from October 2018, making up a total of 6 000 vouchers."

The spokesman noted that the voucher value will be expanded to five different voucher values ranging from \$3,930 to \$9,390 with effect from October 2018 to suit individual needs and choice. Under the "affordable users pay" principle, the less an elderly person can afford, the more the Government will subsidise. The SWD will determine the co-payment level, one of the six categories ranging from 5 per cent to 40 per cent of the voucher service package values, for elderly persons based on their household income.

Currently, 125 Recognised Service Providers (RSPs) have joined the Second Phase of the Scheme, providing a total of about 2 300 day care places and about 3 300 home care places. Voucher holders may choose centre-based service and/or home-based service in accordance with their needs and, if necessary, may use residential respite service.

The SWD spokesman added that for details of the Scheme, the list of RSPs and information on the dates of application for subsidised long-term care services for eligible elderly persons issued with invitation letters, people may visit the SWD website ([www.swd.gov.hk](http://www.swd.gov.hk)). They may also browse the SWD Elderly Information Website ([elderlyinfo.swd.gov.hk](http://elderlyinfo.swd.gov.hk)) for details about the services of each RSP.

Eligible elderly persons or their carers/relatives who have enquiries on the application for the Second Phase of the Scheme or selection of RSPs or service packages may approach the SWD's Centralised Team of the Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly, or the responsible workers of the elderly persons, for assistance, the spokesman added. The telephone number of the Centralised Team, 3107 3013, will operate from Mondays to Fridays, 9.30am to 1pm and 2.30pm to 5pm, except on public holidays.

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## Illegal worker jailed

A Pakistani illegal worker holding a recognisance form was jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday (August 30).

During a joint operation conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD), the Hong Kong Police Force and the Labour Department codenamed "Champion" on July 18, enforcement officers raided a location in San Po Kong. A male Pakistani illegal worker, aged 51, was arrested. When intercepted he was conveying goods. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant.

The illegal worker was charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. He pleaded guilty to the charge and was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure,

conduct initial screening on vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation, with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent interference, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

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## **HK, Saudi Arabia tax treaty in force**

The Comprehensive Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement (CDTA) between Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia will enter into force tomorrow (September 1), a government spokesman said today (August 31).

The CDTA was signed in August 2017. It will come into force on September 1, 2018 after the completion of ratification procedures on both sides. It will have effect in respect of Hong Kong tax for any year of assessment beginning on or after April 1, 2019.

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## **Red flags hoisted at several beaches**

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (August 31) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Repulse Bay Beach, Middle Bay Beach, Chung Hom Kok Beach, St Stephen's Beach, Turtle Cove Beach, Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; Hung Shing Yeh Beach, Lo So Shing Beach, Pui O Beach, Upper Cheung Sha Beach, Lower Cheung Sha Beach and Tong Fuk Beach in Islands District; and Hap Mun Bay Beach and Clear Water Bay First Beach in Sai Kung District.

Meanwhile, due to inclement weather, red flag has been hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District.

Beach-goers are advised not to swim at these beaches.