

Ombudsman probes arrangements for recovering public rental housing flats by authorities (with photo)

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Mr Jack Chan, today (September 19) announced the launch of a direct investigation operation to examine in detail the workflow of and arrangements for recovering public rental housing (PRH) flats for reallocation by the authorities.

Every year, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HKHA) and the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) recover PRH flats due to various reasons for reallocation, such as tenants passing away, moving into residential care homes, purchasing subsidised sale flats, or breaching the terms of tenancy agreement. Last year (i.e. 2023-24), the HKHA allocated about 23600 PRH flats, of which around 19700 were recovered flats. The number of recovered PRH flats is expected to increase as the authorities have recently stepped up their efforts to combat the abuse of PRH.

At present, the HKHA's key performance indicator (KPI) for refurbishing a vacant PRH flat is 44 days. The Ombudsman's Office has noticed that, over the past three years, the average time taken to refurbish a vacant PRH flat has been close to this KPI. Nevertheless, refurbishment works have occasionally taken more than 100 days to complete, with one instance lasting as long as 197 days. Whether the process of recovering and refurbishing PRH flats by the HKHA and the HKHS is proper and efficient will directly affect whether families on the waiting list for PRH can be offered flats as soon as possible.

Furthermore, as the authorities have enhanced the efforts in combating tenancy abuse, the number of appeal cases is on the rise. Under the current procedures, the recovery of a PRH flat is suspended during an appeal. The Office is, therefore, concerned about whether there is room to expedite and improve the workflow of and procedures for appeals.

On the other hand, the Office receives complaints from time to time alleging the authorities for failure to properly dispose of items left in PRH flats by outgoing tenants, particularly singleton tenants, and casually discarding items without contacting the tenants concerned or their next of kin, and without obtaining the tenants' prior consent.

Mr Chan said, "The current-term Government has been making every effort to increase PRH supply to satisfy people's housing needs, and its efforts are delivering tangible results. If PRH flats are recovered and refurbished in a timely manner for reallocation to the families on the PRH waiting list as soon as possible, it would not only shorten their waiting time but also

enhance their sense of happiness and contentment. In this connection, I have decided to launch this direct investigation operation to carefully examine the workflow of and arrangements for the Housing Department (as the HKHA's executive arm) and the HKHS to recover PRH flats, including the specific procedures for refurbishing flats for reallocation and for tenants to appeal against the Notice-to-quit, as well as the various ways to dispose of items left in PRH flats by outgoing tenants. Pertinent improvement recommendations will be made where necessary."

The Ombudsman welcomes views from members of the public on this topic. Written submissions should reach the Office of The Ombudsman by October 14, 2024:

Address: 30/F, China Merchants Tower, Shun Tak Centre
168–200 Connaught Road Central, Hong Kong
Fax: 2882 8149
Email: complaints@ombudsman.hk



[LD invites entries for 25th Construction Industry Safety Award Scheme](#)

Members of the construction industry are invited to enrol in the Construction Industry Safety Award Scheme 2024/2025 (the scheme), which was launched today (September 19).

A Labour Department (LD) spokesman said, "Co-organised by the LD and 16 major stakeholders in the construction industry, the scheme aims at raising the occupational safety and health (OSH) awareness of contractors, site personnel and workers of the construction industry, fostering a positive safety culture and encouraging the adoption of safe work practices in the industry. The scheme also offers awards to contractors, site personnel and workers in recognition of their good OSH performance."

The scheme is divided into three main categories: Construction Sites, Safety Teams and Safe Workers. Entries for the Construction Sites category are further divided into eight sub-categories, namely Building Sites (Public Sector), Building Sites (Private Sector), Civil Engineering Sites, Renovation and Maintenance Works, Minor Renovation and Maintenance Works, Building Sites – Sub-contractors, Civil Engineering Sites – Sub-contractors, and Renovation and Maintenance Works – Sub-contractors. For the Construction Sites and Safety Teams categories, there will be a gold prize, a silver prize, a bronze prize and a meritorious prize. For the Safe Worker category, each winner will be presented with a cash coupon, a certificate and a badge.

To encourage contractors to adopt innovative technology to improve lifting operation safety, a new award, namely Lifting Operation Safety Innovation Award, will be introduced this year in each of the four sub-categories under the Construction Sites category. They are: Building Sites (Public Sector), Building Sites (Private Sector), Civil Engineering Sites and Renovation and Maintenance Works. Besides, additional marks will be given to contestants in the sub-category of Building Sites (Private Sector) who have joined the Smart Site Safety System (4S) Labelling Scheme to further boost application of the 4S in that sector.

All construction contractors, sub-contractors and site personnel in Hong Kong are invited to compete for the awards, provided that no serious or fatal accidents have been recorded on their construction sites and the contractors or sub-contractors have not received any suspension notices served by the LD in the 12 months preceding the enrolment deadline.

Scheme brochures with enrolment forms can be downloaded from the LD's website (www.labour.gov.hk/common/news/pdf/CISAS_2024-2025_TC_EN.pdf) by interested parties. They can also be obtained from offices of the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the LD (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/tele/od.htm). The closing date for the scheme entries is October 9. The results will be announced in May next year.

In addition, the scheme will feature a number of promotional activities, including a safety quiz competition (the quiz), to enhance the OSH awareness of the industry and the public. The quiz is divided into Individual and Group categories. Citizens aged 15 or above and construction-related organisations are welcome to join. Enrolment will start on October 10, and application forms can be obtained from offices of the Occupational Safety and Health Branch or downloaded from the LD's website from that date onwards. The deadline for enrolment is November 6.

For details of the related assessment scheme and criteria, please refer to the scheme brochure. Enquiries can be made on 2852 3565.

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 (September 19) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach, Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; and Silverstrand Beach, Clear Water Bay First Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Call for slogan and nickname for NG, NGD and NSOG's volunteer service

â€‹The 15th National Games (NG), the 12th National Games for Persons with Disabilities (NGD) and the 9th National Special Olympic Games (NSOG) to be co-hosted by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao will take place in November and December 2025 respectively. The call for slogan and nickname for the Games' volunteer service commenced today (September 19).

The announcement on the call was published today by the Guangdong Provincial Executive Committees for the NG, NGD, and NSOG on the Games' website (www.baygames.cn/node_95a97d3a4f/765fc3a9e7.shtml) (Chinese only). Individuals and groups interested to join should follow the guidelines set out in the announcement to submit their entries for slogan and nickname, together with the related documents, by email. The deadline for submission is October 7, 2024.

â€€â€€

A spokesman for the National Games Coordination Office (Hong Kong) said, "The slogan and nickname for the volunteers would help boost their morale, and motivate them to be more engaged in the voluntary work for the NG, NGD and NSOG. We hope Hong Kong people will actively participate in and give their full support for the call."

People's Bank of China will issue Renminbi Bills through Central Moneymarkets Unit of Hong Kong Monetary Authority

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

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) will issue Renminbi Bills through the Central Moneymarkets Unit of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA). Please find attached the tender notice and the tender information memorandum of the Renminbi Bills to be issued by the PBOC. Please also find attached the tender-related information provided by the Issuing and Lodging Agent through the HKMA.