

WSD launches pilot scheme for year-round opening of reservoirs to anglers

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) announced today (March 29) that a pilot scheme on relaxation of the fishing period in reservoirs will be launched on April 1, allowing anglers holding valid fishing licences to fish in the Plover Cove Reservoir and the Tai Tam Group of Reservoirs (i.e. the Tai Tam Upper Reservoir, the Tai Tam Byewash Reservoir, the Tai Tam Intermediate Reservoir and the Tai Tam Tuk Reservoir) throughout 2021.

To prevent overfishing from affecting the environment and water quality of the reservoirs, anglers holding valid fishing licences issued by the WSD were only allowed to fish in reservoirs during the fishing period from September 1 of each year to March 31 of the following year. In view of the ever-growing public interest in fishing activities and that local reservoirs are one of the most popular fishing spots, the WSD is planning to relax the restriction on the fishing period under the premise of not affecting the reliability and safety of the water supply, so as to allow anglers holding fishing licences to enjoy the fun of fishing throughout the year.

Through the pilot scheme, the WSD will assess the impact of relaxing the fishing period on the reservoir environment and the species and quantities of fish therein. Upon completion of the scheme, the WSD will conduct a review to determine a long-term implementation plan.

Anglers wishing to fish in local reservoirs must apply for a licence from the WSD. Applicants aged 13 or above can apply for the licence, which is valid for three years, at a fee of \$33. Please refer to the [WSD website](#) for the application procedures.

Anglers should observe the terms and conditions of the fishing licence to safeguard the precious water resources from being polluted. The WSD reminds anglers and other visitors to keep the gathering grounds, catchwaters and reservoir areas clean, not to litter or throw rubbish or objects into the reservoirs, and to avoid activities such as water play, swimming, washing or ritual release of animals, including fish, in gathering grounds, catchwaters and reservoirs to safeguard water safety and public health. Polluting the reservoirs is an offence. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The WSD will closely monitor the water quality by conducting regular examinations of water samples taken at impounding reservoirs to ensure good water quality.

Office of The Ombudsman announces results of direct investigation into Government's handling of misconnection of private building sewers to stormwater collection system (with photo)

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

The Ombudsman, Ms Winnie Chiu, today (March 29) announced the completion of a direct investigation into the Government's handling of misconnection of private building sewers to the stormwater collection system (referred to as "sewer misconnection") and has made eight recommendations for improvement having regard to the inadequacies found on the part of the Buildings Department (BD) and the Environmental Protection Department (EPD).

Investigation by the Office of The Ombudsman revealed serious delay in the BD's handling of sewer misconnection cases. In one such case, sewer misconnection had remained unrectified for 11 years. The reasons for delay included the BD's ineffective monitoring mechanism, failure to initiate investigation swiftly and properly deploy manpower for handling cases, indecisiveness in taking enforcement action and lack of proactive assistance for buildings without an owners' corporation, a residents' committee or a management company.

The Office acknowledged the practical difficulties facing the EPD in investigating sewer misconnection cases pursuant to the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO). However, the EPD should endeavour to take enforcement action against offenders to reduce coastal water pollution caused by an inflow of untreated sewage. To this end, the EPD should seek the Department of Justice's advice to explore the possibility of adducing circumstantial evidence for applying for a warrant to enter premises for an in-depth investigation and evidence gathering. To increase success in entering premises for investigation, the EPD should also consider taking joint action with the BD, which possesses the power of entering premises. In the long run, the EPD should review the WPCO and consider making legislative amendments to enhance its enforcement power.

The Office considered that the Drainage Services Department (DSD) had properly performed its duties in investigating and referring sewer misconnection cases, as well as implementing mitigating measures.

Data shows that sewer misconnection is one of the major pollution sources affecting the quality of Hong Kong coastal waters. The resultant inflow of untreated sewage into the sea causes pollution and foul odours. To

tackle sewer misconnection cases, the EPD and the BD take action pursuant to the WPCO and the Buildings Ordinance respectively, while the DSD would assist both departments in their investigation. The DSD also builds dry weather flow interceptors and places odour control hydrogel in various districts to alleviate pollution and unpleasant smells.

The Ombudsman has made eight recommendations to the BD and the EPD for improvement. For details, please refer to paragraph 5.19 of chapter 5 of the investigation report.

The full investigation report has been uploaded to the website of the Office of The Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.hk for public viewing.



[Transport Department's online appointment booking service extended to all driving licences](#)

The Transport Department (TD) said today (March 29) that its online appointment booking service has been extended to cover the submission of over-the-counter applications at Licensing Offices for all driving licences, including full driving licences (first issue), probationary driving licences, learner's driving licences, driving instructor's licences, direct issue of full driving licences, temporary driving licences and driving tests (private car, light goods vehicle, motor cycle and motor tricycle) from today. The opening period for online appointments is 10 weeks. At the same time, "iAM Smart" holders can also make online appointment bookings for counter services at the Licensing Offices through the system.

Members of the public can access the new online appointment booking service through this link: www.gov.hk/en/residents/transport/drivinglicense/onlineservices.htm.

An applicant may submit one application for the abovementioned driving licences within a scheduled time slot. If an applicant makes an appointment to apply for a driving test (private car, light goods vehicle, motor cycle

and motor tricycle), he/she may also submit an application for a learner's driving licence (private car, light goods vehicle, motor cycle and motor tricycle) under the name of the same applicant at the same time. Applicants should note that online appointments for over-the-counter applications of learner's driving licences (commercial vehicle) and driving tests (private car, light goods vehicle, motor cycle and motor tricycle) are only applicable at the Hong Kong Licensing Office and the Kowloon Licensing Office, while appointments for the applications of direct issue of a full driving licence and temporary driving licence are only available at the Hong Kong Licensing Office.

In view of the epidemic situation, members of the public will be required to scan the "LeaveHomeSafe" QR code or register their names, contact numbers and the dates and times of their visits before entering the Licensing Offices for necessary contact tracing in case a confirmed case emerges. The service hours of the Licensing Offices are 9am to 5pm from Monday to Friday (except public holidays).

For enquiries, members of the public can contact the Licensing Offices at the following numbers:

Hong Kong Licensing Office	2804 2636
Kowloon Licensing Office	2150 7728
Kwun Tong Licensing Office	2775 6835
Sha Tin Licensing Office	2606 1468

Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

Government to gazette compulsory testing notice

The Government will exercise the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publish in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, which requires any person who had been present at a specified premise during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

Currently, in all districts in Hong Kong, if one or more new confirmed cases are found in the residential buildings (including buildings for both commercial and residential uses), or there are sewage samples tested positive which implied possible infection risks, the buildings will be included in the compulsory testing notice.

A premises fulfilling the above criteria will be included in the compulsory testing notice.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are as follows:

Any person who had been present at Lap Tak House, 81-87 Battery Street, Yau Ma Tei for more than two hours at any time during the period from March 24 to March 28, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by March 30, 2021.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau reminds the public that in accordance with the compulsory testing notice issued earlier, all household members of close contacts are required to undergo compulsory testing. Any person who had lived with a person placed under quarantine pursuant to section 22 of the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) (person under quarantine) in the same residential unit on the date of commencement of quarantine or during the 14 days before that day, and who becomes aware of the quarantine of the person under quarantine when the relevant quarantine has not yet been completed, have to undergo testing within two days of he/she becoming aware of the person under quarantine has been placed under quarantine and report to the Government the result of the test by phone (at 6275 6901), fax (at 2530 5872) or email (ct@csb.gov.hk) within three days of undergoing the test.

Starting from tomorrow (March 29), the mobile specimen collection station at 557 Shanghai Street, Mong Kok (opposite to Langham Place) will be relocated to Beech Street, Tai Kok Tsui and will be open until March 30 (Tuesday) tentatively.

The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations in various districts providing free COVID-19 nucleic acid testing services for the general public are stated in the Annex. Apart from mobile specimen collection stations, persons subject to compulsory testing can also

choose to attend any of the community testing centres in all districts to receive testing free of charge. Persons with "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification or SMS notification from the Centre for Health Protection reminding them to undergo testing as soon as possible may receive free testing at community testing centres or mobile specimen collection stations (if service scope is applicable).

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

1. To visit any of the mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable) at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;
2. To attend any of the community testing centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/);
3. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from any of the 121 post offices, vending machines set up at 20 MTR stations or 47 designated general outpatient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to one of the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and times, and the specimen collection points and times, at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);
4. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority;
5. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the Department of Health (DH) and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf); or
6. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the Centre for Health Protection (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

The spokesman cautioned that testing received at accident and emergency departments of the Hospital Authority or during hospital stays, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of the aforementioned compulsory testing notice.

"If persons subject to compulsory testing have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo testing as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the community testing centres."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notification containing result of the test for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Furthermore, persons subject to testing under the compulsory testing notices should, as far as reasonably practicable, take appropriate personal disease prevention measures including wearing a mask and maintaining hand hygiene, and, unless for the purpose of undergoing the specified test, stay at their place of residence and avoid going out until the test result is

ascertained as far as possible.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm. If persons subject to compulsory testing plan to conduct testing at any of the community testing centres, they can check the centre's appointment status in advance. The hotlines of the community testing centres are available at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/info/.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). Collection and use of any personal data for conducting COVID-19 tests must meet the requirements under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). Government departments or testing service providers which handle the relevant information may provide the data to DH or other relevant departments for anti-epidemic purpose as necessary. The workflow does not involve the provision of any personal data to organisations or persons outside Hong Kong.

The spokesman said, "The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health conditions, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or contacted confirmed cases), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."