

EPD to implement new qualifying standards for environment-friendly commercial vehicles from April 2021

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (February 19) announced that the new qualifying standards (QS) for environment-friendly commercial vehicles to be implemented for the period from April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022, inclusive are as follows:

(a) For heavy duty commercial vehicles (with a design weight of more than 3.5 tonnes):

- i. the QS for heavy duty commercial vehicles (except (a)ii) will remain unchanged as "Euro VI On-Board Diagnostics (OBD) Phase C with Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) emission at least 30 per cent less than the Euro VI limit"; and
- ii. for buses with a design weight of not more than 9 tonnes and light buses with a design weight of more than 3.5 tonnes, the QS will be tightened from Euro VI to "Euro VI OBD Phase C with NOx emission at least 30 per cent less than the Euro VI limit" on par with other heavy duty commercial vehicles.

(b) For light duty commercial vehicles (with a design weight of not more than 3.5 tonnes):

- i. the QS for light duty commercial vehicles (except (b)ii) will remain unchanged as "Euro 6c OBD Euro 6-2 with NOx emission at least 30 per cent less than the Euro 6 limit"; and
- ii. for taxis, the QS will remain unchanged as "Euro 6c OBD Euro 6-2 with NOx emission at least 80 per cent less than the Euro 6 limit".

An EPD spokesman said, "As all first-registered buses with a design weight of not more than 9 tonnes and light buses with a design weight of more than 3.5 tonnes will be required to meet the statutory emission standards of Euro VI OBD Phase C from March 1 this year, there is a need to tighten the relevant QS for the environment-friendly vehicles such that only vehicles with outstanding emission performance outstripping the prevailing statutory requirements can enjoy the first registration tax (FRT) concessions."

To improve roadside air quality and safeguard public health, the Government has been offering tax incentives since April 1, 2008, to encourage vehicle owners to choose environment-friendly commercial vehicles with exhaust emissions that outperform the prevailing statutory emission standards. The EPD reviews the QS of environment-friendly commercial vehicle models annually in the light of vehicle technological advancement, market availability and the prevailing statutory emission standards for the first registered vehicles.

At present, the rates of FRT reduction for environment-friendly commercial vehicle classes range from 30 per cent to 100 per cent subject to

vehicle-class-specific caps per vehicle.

The EPD regularly updates the list of the environment-friendly commercial vehicle models as new models enter the local market. The tightened qualifying standards are available at www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/prob_solutions/environment_friendly_commercial_vehicles.html.

TD to continue to arrange free COVID-19 voluntary testing services for taxi and public light bus drivers and employees of local ferry operators

The Transport Department (TD) announced today (February 19) that starting from Monday (February 22), a new round of COVID-19 voluntary testing services will be arranged for taxi and public light bus (PLB) drivers and employees of local ferry operators.

Testing is an integral part of the strategy in preventing and fighting the virus. The TD will continue to arrange a new round of free voluntary testing services for taxi and PLB drivers for a period of two weeks from February 22 to March 7. The locations, opening dates and hours of the five designated testing centres are at the Annex.

Taxi and PLB drivers may make an appointment via the dedicated online booking system of the TD (<https://covidtest.td.gov.hk>) starting from tomorrow (February 20). At the time of the appointment, drivers should provide their Hong Kong identity card number, select a time slot and designated testing centre, and fill in a contact number for receiving SMS notifications. Upon completion of registration, the system will display the booking confirmation, and issue an SMS which confirms the date and time of the booking, the name of the testing centre and a booking number.

Taxi and PLB drivers who have made an appointment should bring along the original Hong Kong identity card used for booking, a valid taxi driver identity plate or public light bus driver identity plate, and the booking confirmation SMS, and visit the selected testing centre during the appointment time slot. Duty officers of the testing agency will assist drivers with the registration and collect the specimen of the combined nasal and throat swab test. The testing agency will deliver the specimens collected to the laboratory for testing. As no personal information will be indicated on the specimen bottles, the testing agency will only have records of the barcode number of the specimen bottles and will not collect personal

information. Drivers who have a negative test result will receive an SMS notification, while cases with positive test results will be relayed to the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health for follow-up.

Taxi drivers who have completed the testing will be given the "Participation Tag for Taxi Drivers" at the testing centre and may display the tag at a prominent position inside the taxi compartment to enable passengers' checking.

As to employees of local ferry operators, the ferry operators have already notified their employees to bring along their valid staff identity cards or letters issued by the ferry operators during specific time slots from February 22 to 25 to undergo the test at specified locations.

The TD strongly appeals to taxi and PLB drivers and employees of local ferry operators to participate in the testing to assist in safeguarding public health and minimise the risk of community transmission.

For details of the testing service, please visit the website of the TD (www.td.gov.hk).

Government releases review report on governance and management of RTHK

The Government today (February 19) released the Governance and Management of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) Review Report and outlined the major findings and recommendations on improvement measures. The review seeks to ensure that RTHK, as both a public service broadcaster and a government department under the Charter of RTHK (the Charter), fully achieves its public purposes and mission, and complies with all applicable government rules and regulations.

The report covers six areas, namely mechanisms for editorial management and complaints handling, performance measurement and evaluation, management of RTHK's workforce, financial management, stores and procurement, as well as information technology management. Highlights of the report findings and recommendations are set out in the Annex.

"To objectively and impartially evaluate RTHK's performance and programme quality, we should examine whether it can fully abide by its mission and roles as stipulated in the Charter. The report has identified quite a number of inadequacies in RTHK's governance and management. RTHK needs to make improvements in its system and execution.

"Such improvements should include establishing a clear and transparent

editorial process, and strengthening editorial training to ensure all its staff and programme production personnel have a full and comprehensive understanding of its public purposes and mission as a public service broadcaster. They should understand the Charter and abide by it," the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, said.

"I trust that RTHK will critically examine the issues identified in the report, act promptly and positively to implement the recommendations so as to ensure a quality public broadcasting service for the community to strengthen confidence in the work of RTHK," Mr Yau concluded.

In view of the wide public concern about RTHK's programmes and repeated breaches of the relevant codes of practice issued by the Communications Authority (CA), the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) established a dedicated team in July 2020 to review the governance and management of RTHK. The dedicated team comprised members with knowledge and experience on broadcasting services, administration, resources management, as well as organisation management consulting. The scope of the review is as follows:

(1) to review RTHK's administration, including financial control, human resources management and procurement matters to ensure that its manpower and resource deployment complies with all applicable government rules and regulations, and that such deployment is made for the effective delivery of services under programme areas as set out in paragraphs 17 to 20 of the Charter, and where necessary, to identify scope for improvement;

(2) to review RTHK's progress of implementing the recommendations of the Report No. 71 of the Director of Audit, including the need for a transparent and objective system for setting performance targets and benchmarks for measuring results; and

(3) to review RTHK's overall management systems, processes and practices, making reference to best practices of other public service broadcasters, to ensure full compliance with the Charter and the codes of practice on programming standards issued by the CA.

The CEDB has passed the review report to RTHK management today for follow up. RTHK is requested to draw up priority reform measures, an action plan and a timetable to fully implement the recommendations. During the process, RTHK should seek advice from the RTHK Board of Advisors and other stakeholders. The CEDB will monitor the progress of the reform.

The Governance and Management of the RTHK Review Report is available on the CEDB's website (www.cedb.gov.hk/ccib/en/consultations-and-publications/reports/rthkreview.pdf).

LCSD launches online programme "Milonga Online by the Sea"

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has launched the free online programme "Milonga Online by the Sea".

It is about five men and women from different parts of the city, each with different personalities and perspectives, who have come together one evening to enjoy the "milonga", the dance party culture of the Argentine tango.

The milonga – a combination of tango dancing, drinking and chit chat – is a social and cultural activity widely popular in South America. People dress up according to the ambience of the party, and on their feet are shoes suitable for tango. They socialise, drink, saunter around, toast each other, chat, and when in the mood, with tacit eye contact, are ready to take to the dance floor. Here, no social rules are set, everything is impromptu. It is an everyday social activity among friends out to enjoy beautiful moments of their leisure time together.

Audience members can choose from one of the dancers going to a milonga as the subject to follow throughout the entire journey. It is a narrative of an ordinary day and there are no gripping or dramatic turns. The fun is in the details of the happenings in the milonga and beyond. Throughout the video, there is no dialogue, only tango music, and like tango, the story only begins the moment the dancers encounter one another.

"Milonga Online by the Sea" is produced and directed by Felix Chan, with concept and performances by Cherry Tsang. Tango masters are Sandra Mok and Antimo Russo. Other major dancers include Tam Siu-hang, Rocky Lee, Man Cheuk-kam and Chan Wai-tong.

To view the online programme "Milonga Online by the Sea" from today until March 17 (Wednesday), please visit the LCSD's Edutainment Channel at www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/edutainment-channel.html. For programme enquiries or more information, please call 2268 7323 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/dance/programs_1084.html.

Exchange Fund notes tender results

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

Exchange Fund Notes Tender Results

Tender date	: February 19, 2021
Paper on offer	: EF Notes
Issue number	: 02Y2302
Issue date	: February 22, 2021
Maturity date	: February 22, 2023
Coupon	0.16% p.a.
Competitive Tender Result	
Amount applied	: HK\$5,350 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$1,200 MN
Average price accepted (yield)	: 100.08 (0.12 PCT)
Lowest price accepted (yield)	: 100.07 (0.13 PCT)
Pro rata ratio*	: About 87 PCT
Average tender price (yield)	: 100.00 (0.16 PCT)
Non-competitive Tender Results (for applications submitted through Hong Kong Securities Clearing Company Limited)	
Amount applied	: NIL
Amount allotted	: NIL
Allotment Price (yield)	: NIL

* "Pro rata ratio" refers to the average percentage of allotment with respect to each tender participant's tendered amount at the "lowest price accepted" level.