

# Clarification by the Housing Authority on a media report on Hoi Lok Court

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

In response to media enquiries on a media report on a crack reaching 60cm deep found in an external wall of Hoi Pik House, Hoi Lok Court, a Home Ownership Scheme court in Cheung Sha Wan, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) clarified today (May 26) that upon on-site inspections and measurement by a team of professionals of the HA, the concerned crack was found to be caused by some soil loss under the structural beam, resulting in a crack of about 3cm wide which is not a measurement of the settlement extent of the building structure. On the other hand, some soil loss has also caused a gap of about 1.7cm wide to appear between the external wall and the gate valve chamber of underground water supply pipes. In fact, the location of the crack found between the external wall of Hoi Pik House and the pavement mentioned in that media report is where the gate valve chamber of the underground water supply pipes is located. Investigation by the HA revealed that the several cracks mentioned in the media report are related to soil loss nearby rather than settlement.

The media report suggested that the cracks on the external wall of Hoi Pik House are suspected to have been caused by settlement. A spokesman for the HA responded that the HA always attaches great importance to the quality of public housing construction. HA carries out settlement monitoring for the residential blocks of all public housing developments (including Hoi Pik House of Hoi Lok Court) during the construction stage and after the completion until the end of the defects liability period.

The spokesman emphasised that the cumulative settlement readings of the residential blocks of Hoi Lok Court recorded so far are from about 0.3cm to 2.5cm, which comply with the relevant requirements of the Buildings Department. The residential blocks are structurally safe and they do not pose any danger.

"In the second half of March this year when we conducted initial visual inspections in the area, we noticed some mild unevenness at external ground outside the residential blocks of Hoi Lok Court along Lai Ying Street, and some minor cracks at part of an external wall of Hoi Lok Court and at some outdoor facilities like planters. But these cracks do not affect the structure of the building and also do not constitute a danger," he said.

Regarding the allegations of settlement at the first floor podium roof of the shopping center and unevenness at the external ground at the nearby Hoi Ying Estate, the HA also noticed in the second half of March that there has been differential settlement between an one-storey shop at Hoi Ying Estate and the residential blocks. We suspect that it is related to the unevenness found along the pavement of Lai Ying Street.

“The HA has also installed settlement monitoring points at two residential blocks of Hoi Ying Estate. So far, the cumulative settlement readings of the two blocks are from about 0.2cm to 1.1cm which comply with the relevant requirements of the Buildings Department,” the spokesman said.

“We are also aware that the excavation works of a private development projects are being carried out at the construction sites on the other side of Lai Ying Street and there are similar unevenness found at the pavement on both sides of Lai Ying Street. We have referred these observations to the Buildings Department for follow up actions,” he said

The spokesman also said, “Regarding the responsibility for the repair works, generally speaking, if the building quality does not meet the requirements of our building contract, the contractor of HA will undertake the rectification works. However, for this case, we can confirm the responsibility for the repair works only after the investigation of the Buildings Department is completed.”

He stressed that the HA will continue to monitor closely the conditions at Hoi Lok Court and Hoi Ying Estate.

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## **Latest directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation**

Since the situation in Hong Kong has stabilised in terms of the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the recent weeks, and no new local cases have been detected after enhanced testing in the community, the Government will relax social distancing measures in accordance with the "suppress and lift" strategy.

The Secretary for Food and Health (SFH) will issue the latest directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (the Regulation) (Cap. 599F) through notices published in the Gazette today (May 26) to –

1. allow bathhouses, party rooms, clubs or nightclubs and karaoke establishments to resume operation;
2. allow karaoke activities carried on in catering premises, party rooms

and club-houses provided that the applicable directions in respect of karaoke establishments are complied with;

3. allow any part(s) of the club-house being used or operated as a party room to resume operation provided that the applicable directions in respect of party rooms are complied with; and
4. maintain other measures regulating catering businesses and scheduled premises.

The latest directions (summary at Annex) will come into effect at 0.00am on May 29, 2020 for a period of seven days.

A spokesperson added, "The above measures have balanced the oft-competing factors of public health protection, economic impact and social acceptance. They would help maintain social distancing while allowing room for gradual resumption of social activities."

"The Government will continue to closely monitor the epidemic situation and review the various measures in place from time to time with a view to suitably adjusting them taking into account all relevant factors."

Persons responsible for carrying on catering businesses and the managers of scheduled premises that contravene the statutory requirements under the Regulation would have committed a criminal offence. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

Separately, any person who participates in a prohibited group gathering; organises a prohibited group gathering; owns, controls or operates the place of such gathering; and knowingly allows the taking place of such gathering, commits an offence under Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G). Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who participate in a prohibited group gathering may discharge liability for the offence by paying a fixed penalty of \$2,000.

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## **Police condemn netizens for inciting others to disrupt public order**

Police notice that some netizens initiated blockages of main carriageways in various districts in Hong Kong tomorrow morning (May 27), to paralyse traffic, obstructs Police, in an action to surround the Legislative Council.

Police strongly condemn any actions to incite other people to disrupt public order. Illegal blockage of the roads may jeopardises road safety and affect road users, hinder emergency services and may even put other people's life under threat. Police will not tolerate any illegal actions that breach social peace. Resolute enforcement actions will be taken. Offenders will be arrested and any vehicles that caused serious obstruction will be swiftly towed away.

Police reiterate that, according to the Public Order Ordinance, participating in an unauthorised assembly carries a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment.

Police appeal to members of the public commuting tomorrow morning to reserve more time and pay attention to traffic news.

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## **Club-house Subsidy Scheme, Amusement Game Centres Subsidy Scheme and Mahjong/Tin Kau Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme under Anti-epidemic Fund continue to disburse subsidies**

The Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) under the Home Affairs Department continues to disburse subsidies to successful applicants under the Club-house Subsidy Scheme, Amusement Game Centres (AGCs) Subsidy Scheme and the Mahjong/Tin Kau (MJ/TK) Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme set up under the Anti-epidemic Fund.

The three schemes provide a one-off subsidy of \$100,000 respectively to eligible holders of valid Certificates of Compliance issued under the Clubs (Safety of Premises) Ordinance (Cap. 376), amusement game centre operators and MJ/TK licence holders. The schemes aim to provide immediate financial relief to them as their businesses have been hard-hit by the epidemics and social distancing measures imposed by the Government.

The application period for the Club-house Subsidy Scheme started on April 18 and closed on May 18. A total of 565 applications were received. As of today (May 26), 530 applications have been approved and \$53 million of subsidies have been disbursed. The OLA will expedite the vetting of the remaining applications. Successful applicants will be informed of the disbursement of subsidies through letters or emails.

Separately, the application periods of the AGCs Subsidy Scheme and the

MJ/TK Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme both run from April 27 to May 27. Subsidies of \$19.2 million and \$6.5 million have already been disbursed under the schemes respectively. Operators who wish to apply for a subsidy but have yet to do so should submit an application to the OLA as soon as possible. Details of the two subsidy schemes and the relevant application forms are available on the website of the OLA ([www.hadla.gov.hk](http://www.hadla.gov.hk)).

For enquiries, please contact the OLA at 3107 3021 (the Club-house Subsidy Scheme), 2116 5230 (AGCs Subsidy Scheme) or 2117 2977 (MJ/TK Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme).

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## **Employment Support Scheme receives over 130 000 applications**

The Employment Support Scheme (ESS) has received from May 25, the first day of the application period, up to 6pm today (May 26), a total of around 72 000 applications from employers and about 61 000 applications from self-employed persons. The dedicated online portal ([www.ess.gov.hk](http://www.ess.gov.hk)) is functioning well.

Eligible employers and self-employed persons are advised to submit online applications for the first tranche of wage subsidies of the ESS through the ESS online portal until 11.59pm on June 14 (Sunday).

For enquiries, please send email to [enquiry@employmentsupport.hk](mailto:enquiry@employmentsupport.hk) or call the ESS Hotline (1836 122), for which the operation hours during the application period have been extended to Monday to Sunday from 9am to 6pm.

Applicants who need assistance in completing their online applications may call the above Hotline to make appointments with the three ESS Help Desks at the following locations:

- North Point Help Desk at Room 1701, A T Tower, 180 Electric Road, North Point;
- Kwun Tong Help Desk at Room 2507, Prosperity Center, 25 Chong Yip Street, Kwun Tong; and
- Tsuen Wan Help Desk at Room 1206, Chinachem Tsuen Wan Plaza, 455 Castle Peak Road, Tsuen Wan.

A total of over 15 000 enquiries have been received via the Hotline and email, and about 600 persons have made visits to the three Help Desks today.