

Buildings Department to adjust counter services arrangement from April 20

In view of the latest situation of the COVID-19 pandemic and the experience gained in the past three weeks, the Buildings Department (BD) announced today (April 18) that starting from next Monday (April 20) the opening hours of the Receipt and Dispatch Counter at the office of its New Buildings Divisions located at 7/F, 14 Taikoo Wan Road, Taikoo Shing, Hong Kong, will be adjusted to 8.30am to 5.30pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday (except public holidays) for receipt of statutory submissions and related documents and forms for new building works, and collection of the processed plans and related documents.

The BD will continue to provide emergency, essential and limited public services listed in the press release issued on March 22.

Emergency reports can be made on 1823. For general enquiries and reports, members of the public may call 1823 or inform the department by email (enquiry@bd.gov.hk), online reporting (eform.one.gov.hk/form/bd0001/en/), fax (2537 4992) or post (North Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon). In addition, electronic information can be submitted to the BD via receipt@bd.gov.hk.

Latest arrangements for Labour Department public services

The Labour Department (LD) today (April 18) said that starting from April 20, its counter services will be adjusted to provide limited services to members of the public. Branch offices under the Labour Relations Division and the Employment Agencies Administration will provide counter services on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, while other counter services will remain suspended until further notice.

The two Occupational Health Clinics and the Occupational Medicine Units under the department will remain closed. Those who have made service appointments will be individually informed of the alternative arrangements.

The LD will review the situation in due course and make further announcements as appropriate.

For enquiries, members of the public can call the LD's 24-hour enquiry hotline at 2717 1771 (the hotline is provided by 1823), or email the

SED on HKDSE Examination and school resumption

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, at a media session after attending a radio programme today (April 18).

Reporter: How well prepared are schools in terms of the DSE examinations (Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination) coming soon? In terms of school resumption, you said that there is no deadline as to decide when or if school will resume at all. Could you explain a little bit more on that?

Secretary for Education: The schools are now very well prepared for the coming DSE examinations. In terms of the distance between the seats, in terms of all the procedures for cleansing, and also the detailed arrangements including the toilet arrangement and other things, all the schools, all the examination centres, are well prepared to provide a very safe environment for our candidates to take the examinations. Regarding the school resumption, we have not made any firm decision yet. At this stage, we have not set any deadline or a D-Day that school has to resume.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Regional flag-selling activities cancelled

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has been informed by the three flag day organisers that the regional flag-selling activities in public places scheduled to be held today (April 18) have been cancelled, a spokesman for the SWD said.

The three charities are Saint Barnabas' Society and Home, Regeneration Society Limited and Centre for Restoration of Human Relationships Limited. They had been issued Public Subscription Permits to hold flag sales on Hong Kong Island, in Kowloon and in the New Territories respectively from 7am to 12.30pm today.

For enquiries, please contact the individual organisations. Contact information for the above three organisations is as follows:

Region	Name of Organisation	Contact Person	Number
Hong Kong Island	Saint Barnabas' Society and Home	Ms Hon	2548 9056
Kowloon	Regeneration Society Limited	Mr To	2382 6963
New Territories	Centre for Restoration of Human Relationships Limited	Ms Ng	2399 7776

[CE visits Social Security Field Unit in Tseung Kwan O \(with photos/video\)](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, visited the Social Welfare Department's (SWD) Social Security Field Unit in Tseung Kwan O this afternoon (April 17) to encourage the department's personnel who have handled a large number of applications and enquiries in relation to social security programmes amid the epidemic in recent months.

Mrs Lam was briefed by staff members of the unit on its work in recent months, in particular the rising number of applications since early March. She also spoke with colleagues and listened to their views. She pointed out that the severe situation of novel coronavirus infection in the past few months has caused serious impacts on various sectors in Hong Kong, presenting many families and individuals with financial difficulties, and that it is a good time for various social security programmes including Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and the Old Age Living Allowance to demonstrate their function as a social safety net. In addition, the Government announced the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund and other relevant measures worth \$137.5 billion last week to ease the plight of members of the public. One of the measures is the temporary relaxation of the asset limits for able-bodied applicants of CSSA by 100 per cent for six months to support the unemployed.

Mrs Lam expressed her gratitude to the SWD's staff members for their tireless joint efforts to deal with the heavy workload so that people facing financial difficulties can be provided with cash subsidies as soon as possible to meet their basic needs. She said she believed that the department would adopt corresponding measures to support colleagues including internal manpower redeployment and hiring of additional staff, consolidating workflow and streamlining work procedures to address any possible further increase in workload and enable the department to speed up processing of applications so that assistance can be rendered to people in need as soon as possible.

"During the SARS period, I was the Director of Social Welfare and SWD colleagues' spirit of relieving people's burdens during difficult times made me proud. I encourage colleagues to assist people in need to apply for social security with empathy to help them overcome adversity," Mrs Lam said.

