

**HONG KONG
GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
SERVICES**

**DAILY
INFORMATION
BULLETIN**

Friday, August 18, 1972

DRIVING LICENCE PROCEDURES TO BE STREAMLINED TO CLEAR BACKLOG

The Transport Department is implementing a temporary "crash" programme aimed at bringing forward the appointments for driving tests of some 120,000 people.

The programme begins on September 11, and after that date separate Intermediate and Road Tests will be replaced by a combined test.

A spokesman for the Transport Department said today: "The programme aims at shortening the length of time an applicant has to wait for tests."

At present an applicant for a private car driving licence has to wait some eight to 11 months for the written test, another seven to eight months for the Intermediate Test and a further four months for the final road test.

The first batch of letters informing candidates of their new appointment dates for the Road Test programme was sent out today.

"All candidates for Road Tests who have their original appointments falling on or after September 25, will have fresh appointments starting from September 11," the spokesman said.

He explained that as at least three weeks notice would be given, it was expected that all candidates would have sufficient time to prepare themselves for the test.

The first combined tests will be held on October 9. Candidates whose present appointment dates for Intermediate Tests fall between September 11 and October 8 will have their test dates deferred by up to four weeks, and they will

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be duly informed by letter.

"In the long run," the spokesman said, "they will achieve an overall saving in waiting time since, under the existing arrangements, a candidate must wait at least four months more for his final road test after he has passed his Intermediate Test."

The combined tests will be conducted at the following centres:

Hong Kong Island

- (i) C.A.S. Rescue Training Centre, Hawthorn Road, Happy Valley;
- (ii) Public Carpark, Hing Fat Street, Causeway Bay
(near Causeway Bay Magistracy); and
- (iii) Motor Vehicle Inspection Centre, Soo Kun Po,
(near H.K. Football Stadium);

Kowloon

- (iv) Transport Department, Kowloon Office, Pui Ching Road, Ho Man Tin;
- (v) Farm Road Government Offices, Farm Road;
- (vi) North Kowloon Magistracy, Tai Po Road; and
- (vii) Kwun Tong Government Offices, Tung Yan Street, Kwun Tong.

The combined tests will be conducted on prescribed routes at these centres. A candidate will be tested on:

- (a) starting and stopping normally,
- (b) starting and stopping on a slope,
- (c) emergency stopping,
- (d) three point turn,
- (e) reversing and parking,
- (f) use of gears,
- (g) traffic signs and signals,

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- (h) use of hand signals,
- (i) general control of a motor car, and
- (j) road discipline and road sense.

With regard to the Written Test, candidates who have appointments on or after October 16 will soon be informed of new appointments by letter and it is hoped to shorten the waiting times by two to 15 weeks.

In addition to normal office hours, tests will be conducted in the evenings from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., on Saturdays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sundays and Public Holidays, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m..

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INTERIM RAINSTORM DISASTER REPORT SUBMITTED BY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

The Commission of Inquiry into the June rainstorm disasters submitted its interim report to the Acting Governor, Sir Hugh Norman-Walker today.

The report describes the actual events and the rescue operations at the Sau Mau Ping disaster. It also contains a conclusion and lists certain recommendations on how to prevent similar disasters.

The final report will deal with the disasters at Po Shan Road and the incidents at the following places:-

- (1) Ap Lei Chau,
- (2) Belcher's Street (Western District),
- (3) Bullock Lane (Wan Chai),
- (4) Chai Wan,
- (5) Shau Kei Wan, and
- (6) Shiu Fai Terrace (Wan Chai),

and will include the Commission's final recommendations.

The public hearing on the Po Shan Road disaster will resume next Monday (August 21) at 10.00 a.m. in Court No. 4 of Victoria District Court, Battery Path.

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STAFF FOR DESALINATION PLANT

Preparation work on the desalting plant at Castle Peak is well under way, and the Government is now recruiting a number of engineers to undertake resident engineer duties on site and to train junior staff.

The new recruits consist of a Superintending Engineer, Shift Charge Engineers, Mechanical Engineers, an Electrical Engineer and Unit Control Engineers. They will be responsible for the supervision of the construction work and the operation and maintenance of the plant when it is completed.

A Waterworks Chemist will also be appointed to assist the Desalting Chemist in fuel, boiler water, brine, product and seawater analyses, corrosion and pollution monitoring and treatment process supervision.

When the plant becomes fully operational, it will require about 200 engineers and technicians to carry out processing and maintenance work.

International tenders have been called for the construction of the desalting plant which will be situated near the 17 milestone, Castle Peak Road.

It will be the largest of its kind in the world, consisting of six units and processing a total of 40 million gallons of sea water a day.

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PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CEMETERIES REGULATIONS

New and amended regulations to improve the administration of private cemeteries in the New Territories and to make the management of private and public cemeteries more uniform, are published in today's Government Gazette.

They are the Private Cemeteries (New Territories) (Amendment) Regulations 1972, the Public Cemeteries (New Territories) (Amendment) Regulations 1972 and the Exhumation (Fees) (New Territories) Regulations 1972.

Those dealing with private cemeteries require the managers to keep the cemetery clean and tidy, and to make rules to be approved for its proper management and control.

The managers must inform the Director of Urban Services every three months the number of grave spaces available, and submit to him for approval a set of fees for interments and deposits of human remains.

The regulations on public cemeteries increase the interment fee from \$1 to \$10, but provide that no fee will be payable in respect of the interment of a pauper. The cost of exhuming human remains will be increased to \$5.

People selling articles, letting them for hire or exposing them for sale in a cemetery must first obtain the consent of the Director.

In general, fines for contravening the regulations have been increased to \$1,000.

A Government spokesman said all these regulations will come into operation on a date to be appointed by the Governor in Council.

He added that by-laws dealing with private cemeteries in urban areas had been approved in principle by the relevant Select Committee of the Urban Council and would be presented later before the full Council.

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NEW QUARRY IN NEW TERRITORIES

A new quarry at Lam Tei in Yuen Long will be opened tomorrow (Saturday) by the Government Civil Engineer, Mr. H.D. Stead.

The quarry is operated by the Asia Stone Company Ltd. under a 10-year contract from the Public Works Department.

The letting of the new quarry contract is part of the Government's policy to concentrate stone production in large modern quarries on long-term contracts.

The Lam Tei Quarry is designed and developed for modern, efficient and safe operation. The rock will be extracted by deep-hole drilling in benches which limit the height of rock face and make the work of the rock-drillers much easier and safer.

The crushing and screening plant can produce up to 2,000 tons of aggregates a day, which is more than sufficient to meet the demands of the construction industry in Yuen Long and Castle Peak.

The Civil Engineering Office of the Public Works Department is now investigating possible sites for more new quarries on Lamma Island, in Anderson Road, at Lei Yue Mun and at Sha Tin.

If investigations show that sites are suitable, it is expected that at least two more modern quarries will be developed over the next three years. This will ensure that there is adequate production capacity to meet the demands of the construction industry for crushed stone aggregates for concreting in the next decade.

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THE SPACE AGE PLAYGROUND

Hong Kong's first space-age children's playground has been built in Lung Cheung Road to serve the children of the Shek Kip Mei and Sham Shui Po districts, particularly those from the nearby licensed areas.

The playground provides novel play equipment including a moon probe, a space ship and a sputnik. These are metal structures which the children can climb into.

There are also an Eskimo igloo and a Red Indian tee-pee to add a touch of adventure. A toy motor-lorry, complete with steering wheel, is also included.

The playground is part of the Urban Council pleasure ground built at the top of the Shek Kip Mei Service Reservoir. It is situated at the junction of Lung Cheung Road and Nam Cheong Street, and covers an area of 8.6 acres.

A full-sized grass soccer-pitch, two grass mini-soccer pitches and a basketball pitch are also contained in the pleasure ground.

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BOUNDARY STREET SPORTS GROUND TO BE CONVERTED INTO SOCCER PITCH

The Boundary Street Sports Ground is to be converted into a proper stadium.

At present, the ground is only used by schools for holding physical training lessons and sports meetings.

The ground, which has a seating capacity of more than 10,000, will be used for major sporting events once the improvement works are completed next April.

An elevated combined police post and press box will be built near the sports ground entrance in Boundary Street.

The footpaths in front of the spectators' stands, which are turfed at present, will be resurfaced with concrete paving slabs.

A refreshment kiosk will also be constructed near the existing changing room.

Work on the project is expected to begin some time next month.

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TUNG TAU "FACE-LIFT" BEGINS

The Government's \$1 million scheme to improve Tung Tau Resettlement Estate in Kowloon begins today.

The Improvement Scheme, which will be in six phases, is aimed at improving the living conditions of the tenants.

The face-lift will include the re-painting of all the 23 blocks and the conversion of the ground floor open channels into underground drains.

The new drains will be of particular benefit to tenants of ground floor premises, who at the moment, have to cross the open channels to get to their shops.

Today's work centred on the demolition of all illegal structures in front and at the back of shops in Blocks 2,3, 4, and 5.

The clearance operation will finish tomorrow, and work on the conversion of the open channel starts on Monday. The re-painting of the four blocks will take place in early September.

The first phase of the face-lift will take three months to complete, and it is expected that the improvement scheme for the entire estate will be completed in about 18 months.

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DANGEROUS BUILDINGS IN CENTRAL

The Building Authority today declared No. 125 Connaught Road Central to be in a dangerous condition and No. 249 Des Voeux Road Central liable to become dangerous.

The Principal Government Building Surveyor said that No. 125 Connaught Road, a five storey pre-war building, was inspected following a report from an Authorised Architect who had been engaged to carry out building work on an adjoining site.

Inspection revealed that the brickwork of the party wall adjoining the vacant site of No. 124 Connaught Road Central and of the rear main wall was extensively fractured.

There are also signs of crushing of the brickwork of piers in the main rear wall of No. 125 as well as in the kitchen block.

The only access to the upper floors of No. 149 Des Voeux Road Central, which is also five storey pre-war, is by means of the staircase in No. 125 Connaught Road. Although the rear of No. 125 is extensively shored, it is feared that there is a risk of collapse which would involve the staircase access to No. 249 Des Voeux Road and notices of intention to apply for Closure Orders in Victoria District Court at 9.30 a.m. on August 29 were posted today.

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Release time: 6.30 p.m.