



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Wednesday, December 28, 1994

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Ways to tackle indecent articles discussed at briefing	1
Special public transport arrangements for New Year holidays	4
Telephone numbers become eight digits on January 1	6
Food surveillance figures for third quarter	7
Livestock farmers urged to apply for licence	9
Two lots of government land to let	10
New telephone number for parking meter complaints	11
December survey of employment and vacancies	13
Environmental Protection Department Local Control Office moves	14
Flushing water cut on Mid-levels	14
Water storage figure	15
Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results	15
Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations	16

Ways to tackle indecent articles discussed at briefing

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The Government is concerned about the recent proliferation of indecent articles, in particular comic books, on the market and their easy access to young people below the age of 18.

In expressing this concern at a briefing and discussion session with members of all the 18 District Boards held today (Wednesday) on the control of obscene and indecent articles, the Secretary for Recreation and Culture, Mr James So, said the Government would spare no efforts in tackling this problem.

"The Government will adopt a three-prong approach in tackling the problem," he said.

"First, the Government will continue to step up enforcement action.

"Second, we will continue with our publicity and education efforts.

"Third, we will amend the laws to place tighter restrictions on the publication and sale of indecent articles to make them less accessible to young persons," Mr So added.

Outlining the enforcement action taken, Mr So said the number of joint operations between Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA) and the Police had increased substantially this year.

From January to October this year, there were a total of 49 joint operations carried out by the Police and TELA in various districts against obscene or indecent articles including indecent comic books, indecent and obscene computer software, video tapes and CD-ROMs.

So far, more than 12,000 articles have been seized in the joint operations.

The penalty imposed on offenders publishing indecent articles to minors had significantly increased as a result of the courts being made aware of the community's wish to see heavier penalties imposed on Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance (COIAO) offenders.

In a recent case, a fine of \$15,000 was imposed as against the norm of several hundred dollars in the past.

In the first 10 months of this year, the Government has taken out a total of 561 prosecutions against offences under the ordinance and has obtained a total of 312 convictions. This compares with the figures of 329 prosecutions and 234 convictions for the whole year of 1993.

"As regards the publication of indecent articles without a clear and conspicuous notice, we have taken out a total of 193 prosecutions during the first 10 months of 1994. The highest penalty imposed was \$12,000," Mr So said.

He said the Government had also stepped up publicity and education efforts.

TELA has sent several rounds of circular letters to newspaper vendors to remind them that selling indecent articles to juveniles is an offence under the COIAO. A total of 81 pieces of general advice and 28 warnings have been given out to newspaper vendors.

Leaflets have also been distributed by TELA to schools and youth centres publicising and explaining that indecent articles are harmful.

Radio Announcement in the Public Interest (API) and TV Announcement in the Public Interest are also used to publicise the ordinance.

Furthermore, a 24-hour hotline is operated by TELA. So far, more than 120 complaints have been received which led to 30 prosecutions with 23 convictions.

Mr So further said an inter-departmental working group comprising representatives of the Recreation and Culture Branch, Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority, Attorney General's Chambers, Urban Services Department, Regional Services Department and the Police was considering measures to tighten the law to more effectively tackle the problem.

Some of the measures being examined by the working group include:

- * all indecent articles have to be enclosed with properly sealed opaque wrappers;
- * the name and address of the publisher must be printed on the opaque wrapper and front cover to facilitate identification in case the publication contravened the COIAO;
- * the warning notice to be displayed, both on the opaque wrapper and the indecent article, must be at least 20 per cent of the size of the front cover;
- * to give Police and Custom and Excise officers the power to seize, in public places, indecent articles that may constitute evidence of a breach of the COIAO;
- * to create a new provision under the COIAO to make it an offence to possess indecent articles that contravene the law for the purpose of publication; and
- * another new provision to be created to stipulate that a publication will be rendered obscene or indecent if one of the articles in it is obscene or indecent.

Mr So said the Government intended to bring these legislative amendments to the COIAO before the Legislative Council as soon as possible. "We hope to take these legislative amendments to the Legislative Council in early March 1995," he indicated.

He emphasised that the three-prong approach was aimed primarily to protect young persons from the corruptive influence of indecent articles by making it more difficult for them to gain access to such article. This approach is not meant to restrict adults' freedom of access to the reading material they desire.

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994

Special public transport arrangements for New Year holidays

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The Transport Department announces today (Wednesday) that special public transport arrangements will be implemented for the New Year Holiday.

All-night services will be provided by the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) on the New Year's Eve (Saturday).

At the same time, Kowloon-Canton Railway services between Kowloon and Sheung Shui will be extended to have the last departure from Kowloon at 3 am and from Sheung Shui at 2.30 am in the following morning; while Light Rail Transit services will be strengthened to meet the demand.

The Tramways service will be extended to 2 am.

Peak Tram service will be extended to 1.30 am and Star Ferry service on the Kowloon Point to Edinburgh Place route will be extended to 3 am in the following morning.

Additional services will be provided between Central and Discovery Bay from 1 am to 4 am.

All services of the Hongkong Ferry will remain normal.

On China Motor Bus (CMB) services, route nos. 8, 10, 23, 38, 38A, 84M, 590, 592 and 595 will extend their last departure time, up to between 1 am and 2.50 am; special service route no. 308 will operate between Siu Sai Wan and Causeway Bay from 8 pm to 2.45 am.

CMB routes 10, 20, 21 and 81M will be diverted from 7 pm on December 31 to 6 am on January 3, 1995; while routes 10A, 22, 781, 23A, 26, 40M, 43, 25 and 592 will be diverted from the evening on December 31.

The Citybus special bus route no. 6S will operate between midnight and 3 am; while route no. 6A will extend services to midnight on December 31.

On January 1, additional journeys may be operated on overnight routes N72 and N90 to suit traffic requirements.

Citybus route nos. 5, 5A and 12A will be diverted from 7 pm on December 31.

Kowloon Motor Bus (KMB) route nos. 1, 1A, 2, 6, 6A, 9, 7, 26, 2C, 5, 5C, 8, B1, 203, 98D, A1, 8A, 28, 81C, 87D, 216S, 241S, 271S, 281S, 69X, 234X, 208, 271 and 219X will be diverted from 8.15 pm to 2 am.

KMB route nos. 80M, 82M, 1A, 6, 58X, 59X, 81K, 86K, 88M, 5C, 67X, 5 will be extended for about 30 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes after its scheduled operating period.

Additional air-conditioned double-deckers will be deployed to route nos. 271S and 281S.

Cross Harbour Tunnel bus route nos. A2, 103, A3, A5, 102, 106, 170 will be rerouted from 8 pm.

Additional services on all-night service route nos. 121 and 122 will be operated on January 1 between 00.45 am and 1.25 am; while the free interchange between these routes will be temporarily suspended on January 1 and 2.

Supplementary trips on all cross harbour routes may be operated to meet passenger demand.

On Hong Kong Island, Green Minibus (GMB) route no. 28 will be diverted between 7 pm on December 31 and 6 am on January 3; while route nos. 39M and 49M will be diverted from 8 pm on December 31.

GMB route nos. 43M, 47M, 49M and 50 will extend services up to 3 am.

In Kowloon, GMB route no. 1 will be suspended from 8.15 pm on December 31 while route nos. 3, 6, 7 and 8 will be diverted.

GMB route nos. 6 and 18 will extend services from midnight to 2 am and 3 am respectively.

In the New Territories, GMB route no. 606S will be diverted; while route nos. 17, 20K, 81M, 82, 65K, 66K and 68K will extend services up to between 00.01 am and 3 am.

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994

Telephone numbers become eight digits on January 1

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A spokesman for the Office of the Telecommunications Authority reminds the public that from 00.01 am on January 1 next year, all existing seven-digit residential and business telephone numbers in Hong Kong will be changed to eight digits by adding a prefix "2" in front of the existing numbers.

"If necessary, users should remember to re-programme their telephone memories, autodiallers, facsimile machines or other office communication systems on the day and to inform their business and trading partners, overseas friends and relatives of the new telephone numbers."

"Of course, people also need to show the new and correct telephone number on their stationery such as letter heads and name cards," the spokesman said.

Common short-code numbers such as "999" for emergency services, "001" and "002" for international calling, "1081" and "1083" for directory enquiries, "109" for telephone line fault reporting and "1881 - 1887" for telebet services will remain unchanged.

All mobile phone numbers will remain unchanged as they are already using eight digits.

The telephone numbers for paging services will also remain unchanged until October 1 next year.

The paging operators will inform their customers of the numbering changes for their services in the near future.

Further details of the new numbering plan may be obtained from the office by calling 2961 6333.

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994

Food surveillance figures for third quarter

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The Department of Health has carried out 11,380 examinations for chemical, bacteriological, and radioactivity tests under its regular food surveillance programme during the third quarter this year.

The programme is conducted by the department's Hygiene Division to monitor that food supplied to the community is wholesome, unadulterated, uncontaminated, properly labelled and of nutritious quality.

Among 7,616 examinations for chemical analysis, 7,557 were satisfactory while 59 or 0.77 per cent were unsatisfactory.

The unsatisfactory cases were mainly due to food containing non-permitted or excessive food additives such as colouring matters and preservatives; seafood containing higher level of heavy metals; and vegetables tainted with pesticides.

Any food product not conformed to the local food legislation will be required to be withdrawn from the market. They are either returned to the country of origin or surrendered for destruction. To this effect, warning letters have been issued to the importers and local traders for their immediate action to recall their food products.

Bacteriological examinations also showed that out of the 3,612 samples taken, 3,435 were satisfactory while 177 samples or 4.9 per cent were unsatisfactory.

The unsatisfactory cases covered ice cream, milk, shellfish, fish and meat products containing bacterial count and coliform count higher than the microbiological standards.

Advice on food hygiene were conveyed to the manufacturers and retailers. They were also warned that continual sale of bacteriological substandard foods would result in prosecution.

On the monitoring of radioactivity in food, all the 152 samples taken were satisfactory.

The division carried out 53 prosecutions and issued 107 warning letters during the period. Among these law-enforcement actions taken, eight prosecutions and 59 warning letters arose from the checking of 3,060 labels for pre-packaged food.

In the same period, the division inspected 2,507 tonnes of imported meat and 3,757 tonnes of imported poultry in 1,981 consignment inspections.

A total of 132 tonnes of food were found unfit for consumption and were destroyed.

During the period, the department received 66 reports of food poisoning cases, affecting 295 persons. Investigations showed that 23 cases were domestic outbreaks and 36 food-premises outbreaks and seven cases from other places.

Among the cases, 46 were due to bacterial contamination, three cases were due to consumption of seafood contaminated with biotoxin, two cases of chemical poisoning and 15 cases of unknown cause.

More than two-thirds of food poisoning cases were due to bacterial contamination. Members of the public are reminded to observe strict personal, environmental and food hygiene when preparing food to prevent food-borne diseases.

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994

Livestock farmers urged to apply for licence

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Farmers under phase I of the Licensing Scheme for Livestock Keeping are urged to apply for a licence from the Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) as soon as possible.

Making the appeal today (Wednesday), an AFD spokesman said it was against the law if livestock and poultry farms located within the livestock waste control and restricted areas were operated without a licence after the application deadline on June 30, 1995.

Farms affected by phase I of the scheme will include Tolo Harbour and Tolo Channel Area, River Indus Area, Upper Shenzhen River Area, Tsuen Wan Environs and Tuen Mun Environs. Newly defined Restricted Areas around new towns and outlying islands are also included in this phase.

The spokesman pointed out that since July this year, AFD had received a total of 106 applications.

"Judging from the estimated 190 farms within phase I areas, livestock farmers' response has been very encouraging.

"Despite the fact that the deadline for phase I application is still six months away, livestock farmers are strongly advised to apply early because it takes time to process the application and to consider whether their proposed waste treatment system is appropriate," he said.

On the livestock licence, the spokesman stressed that it would be valid for a period of three years, renewable upon expiry.

A fee is chargeable to each licence, ranging from \$750 to \$4,500, depending on the size of the farm and the number of livestock being kept.

Application forms for the licence are now obtainable in person or by post from the following offices: AFD Farm Licensing Unit, Castle Peak Poultry Breeding Centre, Kei Lun Wai, Tuen Mun; Ta Kwu Ling Pig Breeding Centre; AFD's Agricultural Offices in Yuen Long and Tai Po, as well as the AFD headquarters on 12th floor of Canton Road Government Offices.

Completed forms, together with two copies of the plan for the livestock farm, should be sent to any one of the above addresses in person, or by registered post to the Farm Licensing Unit.

Applications should also give detailed information on the plan of the farm and waste treatment system to be used. Other relevant documents for the applicant and his farm should also be attached.

On livestock waste treatment system, the spokesman said farmers could choose or make reference from the guide published by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD).

A pamphlet outlining the licensing procedures is also available for collection at local offices of AFD and EPD as well as at district offices.

Large-scale maps, from which a farmer can identify the location of his farm, are available for public inspection at the Land Registry and EPD's local control offices in Tai Po, Tsuen Wan, Kwun Tong and Wan Chai.

He reiterated that under the Public Health (Animals and Birds) (Licensing of Livestock Keeping) Regulation, any person operating a livestock farm without a licence would be liable to a \$50,000 fine for the first offence plus a daily fine of \$1,000 during the offence period. The fine for subsequent offence is \$100,000.

Further enquiries on licensing can be directed to AFD's Farm Licensing Unit on Tel 462 7422 or 462 7443.

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994

Two lots of government land to let

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The Lands Department is inviting tenders for the short-term tenancies of two lots of Government land in Kowloon and the New Territories.

The 5,860-square-metre lot at Lok Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan, is to be used for parking of vehicles.

The tenancy is for two years, renewable quarterly.

Covering an area of 1,179 square metres, the other lot is at Sham Tseng, Tsuen Wan, for use as a fee-paying public car park.

The tenancy is for one year, renewable quarterly.

The closing date of submission of tenders for both lots is noon on January 13.

Tender forms, notice and conditions may be obtained from the Lands Department, 14th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road; the District Lands Office, Tsuen Wan, and the District Lands Office, Kowloon East, 10th floor, Yau Ma Tei Car Park Building, 250 Shanghai Street, Kowloon.

Tender plans can also be inspected at the offices.

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994

New telephone number for parking meter complaints

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The Transport Department announces that the telephone number of the Parking Meter Complaints Unit will be changed from 824 2111 (seven-digit) to 2318 0616 (eight-digit) starting from 10 am on Sunday (January 1).

The new telephone number will be displayed on the back of all on-street parking meters and associated parking signs.

A spokesman for the department said motorists reporting defective parking meters to Serco Guardian (FM) Ltd, the parking meter management contractor appointed by the department, should use the Meter Complaints Unit's hotline - 2318 0616 - irrespective of whether the defective meters are installed on Hong Kong Island, in Kowloon or the New Territories.

The hotline is manned between 8 am and midnight from Mondays to Saturdays, and between 10 am and 10 pm on Sundays and public holidays.

"To help meter maintenance staff to carry out repairs promptly, complainants should describe the exact location of the parking meter by giving the name of the street, the parking meter number and the registration number of their vehicles," he said.

The parking meter number is indicated clearly on the meter pole. If two parking meters share the same pole, a complainant should find out whether the defective meter is "A" or "B". The letters are marked on the bracket supporting the meters.

Further information on what is wrong with the meter and when it is found out of order will be helpful.

He said upon receiving a complaint, meter maintenance staff would inspect the meter and repairs were usually carried out within an hour or so.

"Therefore, the complainant should not leave his vehicle for too long and should check whether the meter is in order again to avoid being ticketed," he said.

For those motorists who have been issued with fixed penalty tickets despite their reports to the Meter Complaints Unit, they should write to the Police to request cancellation of the tickets.

Written applications together with details of the case and copies of the tickets should be addressed to the Royal Hong Kong Police Force, Section D, Central Traffic Prosecutions Bureau, Traffic Wing, Asian House, 15th floor, 1 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994

December survey of employment and vacancies

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The Census and Statistics Department has just started a quarterly survey to collect data on employment and vacancies in major sectors of the economy in respect of December this year.

The survey results are useful in serving as short-term economic indicators and providing information on the latest changes in the labour market, a spokesman for the department said.

This round of the survey covers about 62,000 establishments which are drawn from various sectors including the industrial sector (mining and quarrying; manufacturing; electricity and gas), the distributive trades sector (wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels) and the services sector (transport, storage and communication; financing, insurance, real estate and business services; community, social and personal services).

Information on number of persons engaged and vacancies as at December 30 will be sought from each sampled establishment.

Questionnaires are being mailed to sampled establishments.

In accordance with the Census and Statistics (Quarterly Survey of Employment & Vacancies) Order, these establishments are required to complete and return the questionnaires to the Census and Statistics Department within the specified period.

If they have difficulties in completing the questionnaires, they are welcome to contact the department for help on tel 582 5076 (or 2582 5076 starting from January 1).

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994

Environmental Protection Department Local Control Office moves

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The Local Control Office (Territory South) and the Noise Control Authority of the Environmental Protection Department will move to the second floor, Chinachem Exchange Square, 1 Hoi Wan Street, Quarry Bay, starting tomorrow (Thursday).

All applications for construction noise permits and noise emission labels for compressors and breakers should be forwarded to the new address from tomorrow.

Relevant application and prescribed forms and information booklets are also available there.

Copies of the three technical memoranda issued under the Noise Control Ordinance are available for inspection free of charge at the new office during office hours.

Members of the public can call the Local Control Office (Territory South) and the Noise Control Authority on Tel 2516-1718 for enquiries.

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994

Flushing water cut on Mid-levels

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Flushing water supply to some premises on the Mid-levels will be suspended from 10 am to 4 pm on Friday (December 30) to facilitate repair works.

The suspension will affect all the premises at Macdonnell Road, Robinson Road, Conduit Road, Mosque Street, Mosque Junction, Castle Road, Seymour Road, Lyttelton Road, Kotewall Road, West End Path, Oaklands Path, 25 Park Road, 1-7 and 22-28 Kennedy Road, 62-76 and 73-79 Peel Street, 75 and 92-102 Caine Road, 15-31 and 30 Shelley Street, and 12-16 and 48-68 Bonham Road.

Also included will be all the premises in Prince Terrace, Ying Fai Terrace and Woodland Terrace.

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994

Water storage figure

Storage in Hong Kong's reservoirs at 9 am today (Wednesday) stood at 73.9 per cent of capacity or 432.837 million cubic metres.

This time last year the reservoirs contained 395.899 million cubic metres of water, representing 67.6 per cent of capacity.

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994

○ Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

Tender date	28 Dec 94	28 Dec 94
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q452	Y497
Amount applied	HK\$5,080 MN	HK\$2,520 MN
Amount allotted	HK\$1,500 MN	HK\$500 MN
Average yield accepted	5.71 PCT	6.99 PCT
Highest yield accepted	5.72 PCT	7.00 PCT
Pro rata ratio	About 31 PCT	About 18 PCT
Average tender yield	5.78 PCT	7.02 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning January 2, 1995

Tender date	3 Jan 95	3 Jan 95
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q501	H555
Issue date	4 Jan 95	4 Jan 95
Maturity date	6 Apr 95	5 Jul 95
Tenor	92 days	182 days
Amount on offer	\$1,500+300 MN	HK\$800+160 MN

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	\$ million	Time (hours)	Cumulative change (\$million)
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Opening balance in the account	1,648	0930	+438
Closing balance in the account	1,818	1000	+379
Change attributable to :		1100	+230
Money market activity	+410	1200	+230
LAF today	-240	1500	+260
		1600	+410

LAF rate 3.75% bid/5.75% offer TWI 121.8 **+0.0* 28.12.94

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.39	17 months	2605	6.35	98.81	7.39
1 month	5.26	23 months	2611	6.90	98.85	7.70
3 months	5.69	28 months	3704	6.15	96.62	7.91
6 months	6.26	34 months	3710	7.25	98.51	7.99
12 months	6.94	60 months	5912	8.15	99.77	8.37

Total turnover of bills and bonds - 9,735 million

Closed December 28, 1994

End/Wednesday, December 28, 1994