



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

Sunday, April 7, 1996

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Sewerage scheme recommended for environmental improvements

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Implementation of the proposed Ting Kau and Sham Tseng Sewerage Scheme will improve the environment in the area, according to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Study commissioned by the Drainage Services Department (DSD).

One of the improvements would be the removal of the pollution significantly from the adjacent coastal waters, a spokesman for the DSD said today (Sunday).

"The current pollution includes effluent from industrial and commercial sources and a population of about 30,000 people. With the commissioning of the treatment works under the Scheme, the resulting water quality at the beaches will improve," he said.

Other benefits include improved sanitation to the local village and removal of the public health hazards and odour nuisance from the nullah.

"An ecologically better environment will be achieved with improved water quality in the local beaches in Tsuen Wan west area," the spokesman said.

The EIA Study concludes that it will be possible to construct and operate the scheme within the guidelines set for acceptable environmental conditions provided that careful note is taken of environmental impacts throughout the design.

"According to the findings, the proposed environmental improvement scheme can be constructed and operated with minimal impact on the surroundings," he said.

The proposed Ting Kau and Sham Tseng Sewerage Scheme was recommended under the Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung and Tsing Yi Sewerage Master Plan Study commissioned in 1989. It comprises the construction of sewerage and pumping stations at Ting Kau and construction of sewerage, sewage Treatment works and disposal facilities at Sham Tseng.

The sewage treatment works are expected to start this year for completion in late 1999.

For those who are interested in viewing the EIA Report and its Executive Summary, limited copies are now available free on a first-come-first-served basis at the DSD office, Room 4213, Revenue Tower, Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

End

Continued decrease in occupational injuries

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The year 1995 saw a continued decrease in the number of occupational injuries reported to the Labour Department under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (ECO).

Of a total of 59,375 occupational injuries reported in the year, 59,128 were non-fatal cases while 247 involved fatalities. Compared with 1994, the total figure represents a drop of 7.8 per cent. The number of fatal cases was six per cent and 13 per cent fewer than in 1994 and 1993 respectively.

The wholesale/retail and restaurants/hotel trade, with 15,592 reported cases, accounted for the largest share or 26.3 per cent of the cases reported in 1995.

Another 26 per cent of injuries were reported in the construction industry and 17 per cent in the manufacturing sector.

Senior Labour Officer (Compensation) (Administration & Assessment), Mrs Jenny Chan, said today (Sunday) that the distribution of injuries by economic sector was similar to that of 1994. In absolute numbers, there was a decrease in injuries in the manufacturing, construction, transport/storage and communication sectors.

The Employees' Compensation Division of the Labour Department assists injured employees and dependants of deceased employees in claiming compensation under the ECO.

A total of 42,239 or 71 per cent of the cases reported in 1995 were settled by the end of the year. The amount of compensation involved was \$265.5 million.

Irrespective of the year of reporting, the total number of cases settled in 1995 was 61,887 with compensation payable amounting to \$917.3 million.

"Under the ECO, the employer is required to take out insurance cover for all employees so that he can fulfil his legal obligations to pay compensation. The Labour Department takes a serious view on compliance with this provision and our Labour Inspectors conduct frequent visits to establishments to detect offences," Mrs Chan said.

In 1995, 529 summonses were heard and 513 were convicted for failure to take out insurance cover. The highest fine imposed for one summons was \$20,000. Under the law, the maximum fine on summary conviction was \$25,000 and one-year imprisonment. Compared to 1994, the number of convictions increased by 55 per cent.

Mrs Chan said that a number of amendments were introduced from February 1, 1995 to extend the coverage of the ECO.

Under the amendments, an employer is liable to pay compensation to employees who are injured in accidents while travelling for the purpose of employment between Hong Kong and any place outside Hong Kong or between any places outside Hong Kong. In 1995, 42 claims of this nature were received.

"For employees who are injured outside Hong Kong and received treatment outside Hong Kong, they are now entitled to claim medical expenses as laid down in the ordinance.

"Furthermore, an injured employee who is granted sick leave beyond 12 months and 24 months from the date of accident would have his earnings adjusted for the purpose of calculating compensation," she said.

The levels of compensation were revised on January 1, 1996. The maximum compensation for injuries and death under the ECO are \$1.72 million and \$1.52 million respectively.

End

Call for more foster parents

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The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (Sunday) appealed to civic-minded members of the public to join the team of foster parents.

"While many children are having fun with their family members during the festive season, there are some other unfortunate children who are in need of love and care," said the officer-in-charge of SWD's Central Foster Care Unit, Mr Simon Lai Yiu-chung.

"These children lack adequate family care because of neglect, illness of parents or other family problems.

"We therefore earnestly appeal to married couples aged between 25 and 60 to come forward to become foster parents."

Foster care is a form of non-institutional residential child care service which aims to provide a temporary alternative family for children in need. There are at present a total of 560 foster care places run by both SWD and non-governmental organisations.

"Through fostering, children can grow under a normal family setting and enjoy happy childhood. The ultimate goal of foster care is family reunion.

"Foster parents can, on the one hand, serve the community and on the other, polish their parenting skills," Mr Lai said.

They are entitled to a monthly incentive payment of \$1,222 plus a monthly maintenance grant of \$2,446 to cover the expenses of the foster child.

In addition, when a child is newly placed in a foster home, the foster family will receive an initial setting up grant of \$1,222 for the purchase of bedding and toys for the child.

Married couples who are interested to become foster parents can call Central Foster Care Unit on 2852 4596 for further details.

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\$17.9 million pay-out to charitable organisations

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The Sir Robert Ho Tung Charitable Fund has recently granted a total of \$17.9 million to 57 charitable organisations in Hong Kong.

This was announced by the Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare and Chairman of the Allocation Committee, Mr Bob Wilson, today (Sunday). The committee is responsible for advising the Governor on allocations from the Fund.

Mr Wilson said major grants this year included a sum of \$4.2 million injected into the Samaritan Fund, which is under the management of the Hospital Authority, to enable it to provide financial assistance to needy patients.

Other allocations include:

- * about \$1.3 million to the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, of which \$0.67 million would be used to purchase equipment to carry out cardiopulmonary assessment and rehabilitation projects for the elderly at risk in Kwong Wah Hospital;
- * \$1.1 million to the Evangel Children's Home for large scale renovation works;
- * \$0.9 million to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to continue their mobile veterinary clinic service;
- * about \$0.6 million to the Hong Kong Red Cross and the St. John Council for Hong Kong each received for strengthening their various services;
- * \$0.5 million to the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society to improve their services;
- * \$0.4 million to the Neighbourhood Advice Action Council to enhance the productivity of its sheltered-workshop for people with a disability; and
- * \$0.3 million to the Chai Wan Baptist Church to replace the furniture and equipment damaged by a land slip last year in its Child Care Centre and Children and Youth Centre.

One of the largest charitable trusts in Hong Kong, the Sir Robert Ho Tung Charitable Fund was set up with a bequest of \$0.5 million by the late Sir Robert Ho Tung in 1956.

In 1966, the capital of the Fund was increased through an injection of \$4.95 million from the China Charitable Fund set up by him.

The Sir Robert Ho Tung Charitable Fund is managed by HSBC Trustee (Hong Kong) Ltd.

Applications are invited once a year in around June/July through the Department of Health, the Hospital Authority, the Social Welfare Department, the Education Department, the Home Affairs Department and the Agriculture and Fisheries Department.

End

ED staff awarded for "incentive"

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The good services of five Education Department staff were paid off recently when they won the staff incentive awards.

The awards, comprised a meritorious certificate and a watch embossing with the logo of the department, were presented to the winners by Senior Assistant Director of Education, Mr Tsui See-ming, who praised them for their outstanding performance.

The five awardees are Education Officer (Administration) of Wong Tai Sin District Education Office, Ms Fong Hoi-wan; Assistant Master of the Intensive Remedial Services Section, Mrs Lam Sin Yuk-ching; Principal Assistant Master of Ho Man Tin Government Secondary School, Mr Lung Teung-siu; and clerical officers Mr Kan Tsung-to (Tuen Mun Government Secondary School) and Ms Yan Sau-mui (Sir Ellis Kadoorie Secondary School(Sookunpo)).

Ms Fong was highly praised for her helpfulness and responsiveness in handling enquiries from school heads, teachers, students and parents.

She was known to talk with a parent over phone patiently for as long as three hours. This evidently showed she did her utmost to serve the public.

"I believe all district staff perform their duty well and render the best service to the public," Ms Fong said.

Mrs Lam worked with the Resource Help Service team of the Resource Teaching Unit. She helped to conduct intensive remedial teaching programmes for physically handicapped students in ordinary primary and secondary schools.

These programmes were held at their schools and at the resource teaching services centres.

A parent of a primary schoolboy with congenial heart disease complimented Mrs Lam for her dedication in helping students with special needs and offering counselling and advice to schools and parents.

Mr Lung had served the department for 32 years. He was nominated for taking the initiative to improve the learning environment of his students.

He decorated each corner of the school with students' artwork. Besides beautifying the environment, it could also enhance students' appreciation of self and others.

As a member of the Parent-Teacher Association, he organised a parent-child calligraphy class to promote the relationship between schools and parents.

Mr Kan and Ms Yan were nominated for their effort to instil the idea of good customer service into their colleagues.

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Voluntary observers' contribution to weather coverage

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To many people, five minutes always slip away easily without being noticed. But to Kelvin Lee, five minutes a day means a lot to him and to the Royal Observatory (RO).

Every morning at around 9 am, come rain or shine, Kelvin goes to the lawn near his office in the Chinese University to take the temperature and humidity readings, as well as to change the recording chart on the autographic rain-gauge.

Kelvin is a technician helping in research in the Geography Department of the University and a member of a team of voluntary rainfall observers for RO.

He said: "I am not a professional weatherman, but taking weather measurements has become part of my everyday life."

Kelvin's eagerness to help, his interest in the field, and his sense of responsibility have kept him in the role as a voluntary rainfall observer for more than 10 years.

"The job is neither difficult nor time-consuming. However, one has to be meticulous and the figures have to be accurate.

"Satisfaction comes when I find myself keeping an unbroken record of data on weather and knowing that to a certain extent I have contributed to the accuracy and a wider coverage of the weather record of the territory.

"This was how in fact the wealth of centuries of meteorological records of many observatories in the world have been built up," he said.

Although Kelvin is an old hand in taking weather measurements, he has his awkward and helpless moments.

"Changing the rainfall chart is a real challenge in a heavy downpour.

"You have to tackle a slippery and muddy lawn, an umbrella flipped over by the wind and the smeared ink on a soaked rainfall chart at the same time," he recounted.

At present, RO has a network of about 90 rainfall stations, with some 70 of them being operated manually. Apart from those at RO Headquarters and meteorological stations, manual rainfall observations at other stations are carried out by voluntary observers from all walks of life: government departments, schools, institutions, golf courses and building contractors.

Mr C H Au, a Scientific Officer of RO, said: "Such stations are inspected regularly to ensure proper maintenance of the instruments and the required standard of reporting."

The voluntary observers are also asked to report any suspected fault with these instruments to the RO.

"Training is provided to newly recruited voluntary observers so that they can familiarise with the operation of rain-gauges."

The type of rain-gauge which most voluntary observers are using is the ordinary rain-gauge. It is read manually using a measuring cylinder.

The rainfall data collected by voluntary observers, proved to be very useful, serves a number of purposes.

"It helps RO to conduct hydrometeorological analysis and compile the 'Monthly Weather Summary' and 'Summary of Meteorological Observations in Hong Kong'.

"The information is also used by engineering consultants and academic institutions in planning of water resources, drainage design, flood control and academic research," Mr Au said.

"It is also for cross-checking with data collected by automatic rain-gauges.

"Only with the help of voluntary observers can we maintain a comprehensive record of rainfall data which is available to the Government and the public. Their help is very much appreciated," he added.

End

Big saving in electricity consumption achieved

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The Government has saved \$10 million in electricity consumption in 1995 from an 'energy audit programme' which has been introduced since 1993 to enhance the efficiency of air-conditioning, lighting and other electrical installations in selected public buildings.

Under the programme, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) identifies opportunities to reduce electricity consumption and takes action to enhance the efficiency of electrical and mechanical installations.

Saving has been achieved for example through resetting room temperature to higher values in summer, switching off lights and air-conditioning during period of non-uses and re-scheduling the operation of chiller plants.

It is expected the energy saving measures now in place in 21 public buildings will result in an additional saving of \$1.2 million this year.

The success in energy saving leads EMSD to set aside \$6 million to implement energy saving measures which require major capital investment on 20 government buildings in the next three years.

It also leads the Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee to produce a booklet entitled "Guidelines on Energy Audit" for wide distribution to related professionals, bulk tariff customers of power companies, property management companies and interested groups.

Based on experience gained in the Energy Audit Programme, the booklet aims to provide useful information to both the public and the professionals on how to achieve saving in electricity consumption.

The booklet is available at the EMSD Energy Efficiency Office at 11th floor, 111 Leighton Road, Causeway Bay, Tel 2881 1562.

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Stamp albums from Chinese Post Office to be on sale

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The acting Postmaster General, Miss Nancy Law, today (Monday) announced that the 1995 Prestige Annual Album, the 1995 Annual Stamp Pack, and China's Five Scared Mountain Album issued by the Chinese Post Office will be on sale at the following eight philatelic offices as from Wednesday (April 10):

Airport Post Office
Beaconsfield House Post Office
General Post Office
Granville Road Post Office
Peak Post Office
Sha Tin Central Post Office
Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office
Tsuen Wan Post Office

The selling prices are:

1995 Prestige Annual Album - \$200
1995 Annual Stamp Pack - \$100
China's Five Scared Mountain Album - \$90

A restriction of a maximum of two items per product per customer queuing will be imposed on Wednesday.

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