



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Survey on Lantau taxis

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The Transport Department is currently conducting a survey on the operation characteristics and finance of Lantau taxis.

A spokesman for the department said today (Saturday) that the survey was an annual exercise comprising a questionnaire survey and a meter reading survey.

Questionnaire survey forms and sketches showing the locations of the meter reading centre have been distributed to Lantau taxi owners.

For the meter reading survey, Lantau taxi owners should present their vehicles to the meter reading centre for five consecutive Tuesdays on January 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30, 1996.

Questionnaire survey forms should be returned to the Transport Department as soon as possible.

The spokesman urged owners to participate in the survey to help the department assess the operating conditions of Lantau taxis.

Results of the survey will facilitate the formulation of future taxi policy and assessment on fare revision applications from the trade.

He said the information collected would be treated confidentially and used for statistical analysis only.

End

No re-entry visa for PRC passport holders resident in HK

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The Immigration Department announced today (Saturday) that with effect from January 1, 1996 People's Republic of China (PRC) passport holders resident in Hong Kong will not require re-entry visas to resume residence in Hong Kong.

It is introduced to enhance the department's operational efficiency after the implementation of the Immigration Control Automation System at immigration checkpoints.

"From that date onwards, all PRC passport holders resident in Hong Kong do not require re-entry visas to resume residence from a trip outside Hong Kong provided that they return to Hong Kong within 12 months of departure or the limit of stay imposed, whichever is the earlier," a spokesman for the department said.

"For those who are admitted for employment or studies, the additional requirement is that they are returning to resume the same employment or to pursue the same course of studies.

"The new arrangement also applies to workers under the General Importation of Labour Scheme and the Airport Core Projects Scheme, but do not apply to PRC passport holders on visit or in transit."

"Through the advanced technology, the immigration status of these temporary Hong Kong residents are available on-line. Hence the re-entry visa requirement can be dispensed with," the spokesman said.

"Employers are reminded of their duty to inform the Immigration Department promptly in writing the early termination of employment contract with their workers," the spokesman added.

For further information, members of the public may telephone 2824 6111 or use enquiry faxline 2877 7711.

End

Water Supplies Department enhances telephone enquiry service

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The Water Supplies Department's automated telephone enquiry service - the Water Infolink - will be enhanced from Monday (January 1, 1996).

Announcing this today (Saturday), a spokesman for the department said that starting from the New Year's Day, consumers could just call the Water Infolink on 2802 9966 by means of a touch-tone telephone and they would be able to gain a fast access to information about their water/sewage account balances and other general information on water accounts and water supplies.

"Consumers can also make use of the service to request for frequently used forms," he said.

The spokesman added that the Water Infolink provided general information 24 hours a day and copies of forms and information text could also be obtained through facsimile transmission.

"However, service on individual accounts such as requests for account balance and duplicate bills is only available from 8 am to 8 pm Mondays to Fridays and from 8 am to 1 pm on Saturdays, excluding public holidays," he said.

Under special circumstances, when requested by the Water Supplies Department, consumers can report their meter readings through the Water Infolink.

"Consumers who would wish to enquire about this Water Infolink service can telephone 2824 5000 during office hours," the spokesman added.

End

Separation of adult and children programmes on Infoline

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The Telecommunications Authority, Mr Alex Arena, announced today (Saturday) that he had given approval to Hong Kong Telephone Company Ltd (HKTC) to implement a new Infoline access arrangement. With effect from January 1, 1996, the prefix of Infoline service changes from "173" to "900".

Furthermore, children programmes will be separated from adult programmes. Prior to this date, a customer who had opted to have access to children programmes was automatically given access to adult programmes as well. The new arrangement resolves the long standing problem of unauthorised access by minors to adult programmes on the Infoline service.

The new access arrangement for Infoline service has been discussed between the Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) and HKTC for a number of months. This is in fact the second phase of the Infoline access improvement programme.

Information providers, the Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing and the Telecommunications User & Consumers Advisory Committee (UCAC) have been consulted before arriving at the final implementation plan.

"I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the development of this new access arrangement for Infoline service, particularly the UCAC members who have given a lot of valuable advice to OFTA on this subject," Mr Arena said.

End

Fund-raising schedule for January

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Thirteen organisations have been granted permission to raise funds next month (January), a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department said today (Saturday).

They will either sell flags, tokens or similar items, or place donation boxes in designated public places.

Members of the public can call the department's hotline 2343 2255 in case of doubt.

Any organisation planning to hold activities involving collection of money or sale or exchange for donation of badges, tokens or similar articles in a public place for charitable purposes should apply for a public subscription permit from the Social Welfare Department.

The spokesman appealed to organisers to take precautions against any possible fraud.

"Sellers should display the permit or carry copies of the permit for inspection upon request if the fund-raising is mobile," he said.

The spokesman also advised them to prepare guidelines for sellers, setting out the places and the times for selling and the collection points for bags.

"Organisers should inform the Police in case of loss of property, and seek their help when fraudulent acts, such as tampering of collection bags or making unauthorised selling, are found," he added.

Permits are given to the following organisations for raising funds next month:

Flag Day

<u>Event date</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
January 6	Oxfam Hong Kong
January 13	Hong Kong Playground Association
January 20	The Mong Kok Kai-fong Association Ltd
January 27	Chai Wan Baptist Church

Public Subscription

<u>Event day</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
January 1 - 20	World Vision Hong Kong
January 1 - 7	Perkie Bear Ltd
January 1 - 7	L & M Promotions
January 1 - 6	The Hong Kong Land Property Co Ltd
January 1, 6, 7 & 9	Pok Oi Hospital
January 1	Sharon Au & Associates Ltd
January 6 & 27	Land of Virtue Centre Ltd
January 7, 14, 21 & 28	Jesus is Lord School of Ministry (HK) Ltd
January 20	Sowers Action

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$ Million</u>	<u>Time (Hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative Change (\$ Million)</u>
Opening Balance in the account	1,855	09:30	+95
Closing Balance in the account	1,762	10:00	+95
Change Attributable to:		11:00	+95
Money Market Activity	+95	11:30	+95
Laf Today	-188		

Laf Rate 4.25% Bid/6.25% Offer TWI 122.7 *+0.0* 30.12.95

End

Handy dial-for-help on highways

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Whom will you ask for help while you have vehicle problems on a highway where no immediate help is in sight?

The fast moving traffic and fewer exits of Hong Kong highways prohibit you or your passengers from walking a long distance for help when your vehicle breaks down or involves in an accident.

At this point of time you would expect to be seen by a passing-by traffic police or to call the police by using your mobile phone.

However, Lady Luck may not be on your side as minutes gone and there is no sight of traffic police or you don't have a mobile telephone at hand, or it is not functioning for low battery or you are in a "blind spot" of your phone network.

To overcome this and provide instant assistance for motorists, a series of emergency telephone systems (ETS) have been installed at key locations along strategic road network (SRN) in the territory by the Government.

The Transport Department's Senior Engineer/Highway Surveillance and System, Mr Tsang Yun-wing, said today (Sunday) that more than 497 emergency telephones had been installed on major roads in Hong Kong since 1977 to help motorists.

He said: "Emergency telephone provides direct voice communications between motorists and the respective Police Control Centres. It is one of the most commonly used traffic surveillance facilities, which has been used successfully in many other countries.

"The two-way communication also assures the caller that his report of traffic accident or request for assistance has been acknowledged so that speedy response and service can be provided."

The ETS have been coming through three generations since 1977 changing from the direct line-to-connection panel mode in the first generation; line-to-concentrator-electronic console in the second generation; and to the present generation of line-to-concentrator-computer system to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

The latest system, when activated, can show on the computer screen the location of the caller and provide with better audibility.

It also provides with self-checking facilities for its proper functioning to faults detect system or cable damages so that public confidence in their serviceability is enhanced.

A typical ETS consists of telephone sets, concentrator and associated cable network on the field, and control centre's equipment including central equipment, control panel and computer.

The telephone sets are strategically installed at suitable locations at about 500-metre intervals along both sides of SRN roads.

SRN consists of trunk roads linking various districts of the territory, including Island Eastern Corridor, West Kowloon Corridor, Kwun Tong By-pass, Ma On Shan Road, Tolo Highway, New Territories Circular Road, Sha Tin Road, Tuen Mun Road, Lok Ma Chau Road and Tsing Yi Bridges.

In 1994-95, a total of 426 calls were received, a decrease of 50 calls or 11 per cent comparing to 476 calls received in 1993-94.

"In analysing the records, we find out that the combined calls of 383 from goods vehicles (226) and private cars (157), representing 90 per cent of total calls by vehicle types.

"The main reason for using ETS was vehicle breakdowns with 416 calls recorded in 1994-95 and 455 calls in 1993-94," Mr Tsang said.

The highest usage rate of ETS was recorded on Tolo Highway with 208 calls received in 1994-95 and 267 calls in 1993-94, representing 49 per cent and 56 per cent of the respective yearly figures.

It is followed by Island Eastern Corridor (75 in 1994-95), New Territories Circular Road (65 in 1994-95), and Tuen Mun Road (49 in 1994-95).

According to the record, ETS were more frequently used between 8 am and 8 pm with 317 calls received, or 74 per cent of total calls.

However, records do not clearly indicate which month or months has/have more callers.

Looking forward to the future development of ETS, Mr Tsang said: "We are planning to install more emergency telephones on road sides according to priority, and gradually upgrade the existing old system should resources permitted."

"We are also considering introducing term contract system for the supply and installation of ETS to shorten the proceeding time and improve quality."

ETS are managed by the Transport Department, and maintained by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department and the Highways Department. The Police is in fact physically monitoring them at various Police Control Centres.

End

Compensation rates for work injuries to be raised

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Compensation rates for work injuries resulting from employment-related accidents or occupational diseases will be raised from tomorrow (Monday).

The wage ceiling for calculating compensation for permanent total incapacity and death under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (ECO) will be raised to \$18,000. Accordingly, the maximum amount of compensation payable for permanent total incapacity and death will be \$1,728,000 and \$1,512,000 respectively.

The minimum compensation will be \$262,000 for death and \$297,000 for permanent total incapacity. For employees requiring attention, the maximum amount of compensation will be \$356,000.

The maximum costs for supplying and fitting prostheses or surgical appliances will be raised to \$28,000. For the repair and renewal of such items, the maximum amount will be \$86,000.

The level of deemed minimum earnings per month for calculating compensation will be revised to \$2,450.

The minimum surcharge for late payment of compensation assessed or approved by the Commissioner for Labour will be increased to \$420 on expiry of the payment period. Where compensation remains unpaid three months after the expiry period, the minimum surcharge will be \$840.

The burial expenses for employees who died at work and the maximum daily reimbursement for medical expenses under the ECO will be revised to \$14,000 and \$160 respectively.

The same rates will apply to funeral and medical expenses payable under the Pneumoconiosis (Compensation) Ordinance (PCO). The amount of compensation for care and attention under the PCO will be increased to \$4,050. The amount of \$2,100 included in the formula for calculating the monthly compensation for total incapacity will also be adjusted to \$2,570.

Enquiries on employees' compensation can be made on 2717 1771.

End