



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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**Saturday, December 23, 1995**

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### Elderly urged to become volunteers

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Elderly who are interested in serving the community are urged to join an older volunteers programme to help other senior citizens in need of assistance.

About \$4 million has been allocated from the Lotteries Fund to finance the Older Volunteers Programme which was launched in October this year on an experimental basis for two years, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department said today (Saturday).

"The programme was an initiative of the report of the Working Group on Care for the Elderly, published in August last year, which recognises the need to mobilise elderly people to be effective and contributory members of society, and to develop a system to enable them to take part in activities in society as an important source of volunteers.

"All older volunteers recruited will be provided with adequate training and supervision by the eight operating non-governmental organisations (NGO)," the spokesman said.

There are eight project teams operated by eight multi-service centres for the elderly.

Some examples of the work to be carried out by the volunteers include community networking and neighbourhood support projects, reaching-out to elderly at risk, organising recreational and social activities for the elderly, visits to elderly people, patients and disabled people in hospitals, institutions and centres.

"Starting January next year, the eight multi-service centres concerned will introduce a telephone service whereby older volunteers will give concern calls to elderly people in need, and answer enquiries from the general public regarding information on community resources related to elderly service," the spokesman added.

Elderly wishing to join the programme may approach the following NGOs -

- \* Caritas Hong Kong - Yuen Long Multi-service Centre for the Elderly, 11-20A Ying Shui House, Shui Pin Wai Estate, Yuen Long (Tel 2479 7383);
- \* Christian Family Service Centre - Kwun Tong Multi-service Centre for the Elderly, 3-8B Block 45, Sau Mau Ping Estate (Tel 2727 1234);
- \* Diocesan Welfare Council - Lok Man Alice Kwok Integrated Services Centre, ground floor, Block H, Lok Man Sun Chuen, To Kwa Wan (Tel 2333 1854);

- \* St James Settlement - Central and Western Multi-service Centre for the Elderly, 11th floor, Urban Council Sheung Wan Complex, 345 Queen's Road Central (Tel 2805 1251);
- \* Hong Kong Society for the Aged - Eastern District Multi-service Centre for the Elderly, ground floor, Provident Centre, 53 Wharf Road, North Point (Tel 2563 0187);
- \* Tung Wah Group of Hospitals - Wilson T S Wang Multi-service Centre for the Elderly, ground floor, Green Heron House, Sha Kok Estate, Sha Tin (Tel 2647 2511);
- \* The Salvation Army - Tai Po Multi-service Centre for the Elderly, second floor, Tai Po Community Centre, Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po (Tel 2653 6811); and
- \* The Salvation Army - Yau Ma Tei Multi-service Centre for the Elderly, 11 Wing Shing Lane, Yau Ma Tei (Tel 2332 0005).

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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|                                | \$ Million | Time<br>(Hours) | Cumulative<br>Change<br>(\$ Million) |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
|                                | -----      | -----           | -----                                |
| Opening Balance in the account | 2,169      | 09:30           | +140                                 |
| Closing Balance in the account | 2,134      | 10:00           | +140                                 |
| Change Attributable to:        |            | 11:00           | +140                                 |
| Money Market Activity          | +140       | 11:30           | +140                                 |
| Laf Today                      | -175       |                 |                                      |

Laf Rate 4.25% Bid/6.25% Offer TWI 122.6 \*+0.0\* 23.12.95

End

### Welfare recipients urged to watch out for tricksters

\* \* \* \* \*

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (Sunday) urged recipients of welfare assistance, the elderly in particular, to watch out for tricksters.

A spokesman for the department said no money would be demanded from SWD staff in the process of applying for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and Social Security Allowance (SSA).

"It has been found that elderly people receiving CSSA or SSA could easily fall prey to impostors who claimed to be officers of the SWD or volunteers.

"These unruly elements usually gained access into the premises of the elderly victims and then robbed them of their money.

"We urge members of the public, including CSSA and SSA recipients, to be on guard against tricksters. They should check for the departmental identity cards of visitors who claim to be SWD staff," the spokesman said.

He stressed that the services of processing CSSA and SSA applications were entirely free of charge and any demand for money should be brought to the attention of the SWD or the Police for follow-up investigations.

To arouse public awareness, posters advising welfare recipients to beware of tricksters have been put up at the SWD's 32 social security field units throughout the territory.

"In case of doubt, members of the public can call the nearest social security field unit or the SWD hotline 2343 2255," he added.

End

### Hong Kong's port retains top position

\* \* \* \* \*

Container terminal throughput figures for November indicate that Hong Kong is likely to retain its title as the world's busiest container port in 1995.

In the first 11 months of the year, the eight terminals at Kwai Chung handled 7.5 million TEUs (20-foot equivalent units). That is an increase of 14 per cent over the same period in 1994.

Official figures for the whole port, which include mid-stream handling and river trade, are available only up to the end of August, but these show that Hong Kong handled 8.1 million TEUs in the first eight months of 1995.

Using the latest figures as a base, the Port Development Board estimates that Hong Kong's throughput will total 12.6 million TEUs in 1995.

The terminals will handle 8.3 million TEUs, some three million TEUs will be handled mid-stream and river trade will account for 1.3 million TEUs.

Hong Kong's figures for the eight months to the end of August were 346,000 TEUs more than Singapore, the world's second busiest container port, handled in the same period.

In August alone, Hong Kong handled 1.12 million TEUs. Singapore handled 1.04 million, the first time that Singapore handled one million TEUs in a month. Hong Kong passed the one million a month mark in July 1994 and handled more than one million TEUs a month from April to August 1995.

The 14 per cent increase in throughput for 1995 shows that Hong Kong is not suffering from port congestion. Port operators say that there is currently spare capacity at the Kwai Chung terminals.

Port Development Board Secretary, Mr Tony Clark, said that as growth continued this capacity was vital. "We are likely to have spare capacity to see us through 1996 and perhaps into 1997, but we will definitely need the first berth of our next terminal during 1998," he added.

Hong Kong has so far been able to handle its huge growth in throughput thanks largely to greatly increased productivity at the container terminals.

Two years ago the estimated capacity at Kwai Chung was 7.3 million TEUs a year. Thanks to heavy investment in new equipment and new working methods, the terminal operators have increased this to 9.15 million TEUs and are confident that they can expand this to more than 10 million TEUs a year.

End

#### Smoking hazardous to industrial safety

\* \* \* \* \*

Workers in factories and catering establishments should not smoke in non-smoking areas in their workplaces as such act could cause fire easily, especially during the dry season.

"Smoking in non-smoking areas is not only dangerous but also a selfish act as it may endanger the safety of both the smoker and his fellow workers," the Chief Factory Inspector of the Labour Department, Mr Chan Tat-king, said today (Monday).

He reminded workers that they had the duty under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance to co-operate with their employers by adopting safety precautions in workplaces.

Any worker who fails to comply with safety regulations is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

In 1994, eight workers were prosecuted for smoking in non-smoking areas of notifiable workplaces. In the first 10 months of 1995, 11 prosecutions were taken out for the same offence.

End

### Contractor fined for unsafe demolition

\* \* \* \* \*

A registered contractor and one of its employees have recently been fined a total of \$40,000 at the Western Magistracy for unsafe demolition work at a site in Bowen Road.

The charges included the failure to provide adequate safety precautions and causing danger to members of the public. Both defendants pleaded guilty.

The contractor, Willey Construction and Engineering Company, was fined \$30,000, and the employee \$10,000.

Commenting on the case, the Assistant Director (Legal and Management) of the Buildings Department, Mr Cheng Wei-dart, reminded registered contractors of their duties to ensure safety on building and demolition sites.

"Under the Buildings Ordinance, registered contractors have the responsibility to supervise and ensure that all building and demolition works are carried out in a safe manner and in compliance with the plans approved by the Building Authority," he said.

Mr Cheng pointed out that the Buildings Department had issued clear guidelines for demolition works. Failure to follow the advice could jeopardise public safety.

"Our Site Monitoring Section is visiting sites regularly to deter dangerous operations.

"The Buildings Department expects building professionals and contractors to observe safety rules. We will take legal action whenever these rules are violated," Mr Cheng said.

End

Elderly home operators urged to apply licence early

\* \* \* \* \*

Operators of residential care homes for the elderly are urged to apply for a licence or a certificate of exemption from the Social Welfare Department's Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (LORCHE) as early as possible.

The LORCHE, officially established on April 1 this year in conjunction with the implementation of the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance, has so far received about 400 applications from residential care homes for the elderly, a spokesman for the department said today (Monday).

Applications for either a licence or a certificate of exemption should be forwarded to the LORCHE at Room 2354, 23rd floor, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai.

"With the implementation of the new legislation, residential care homes for the elderly will have to comply with the licensing requirements on location, space, design, structure, safety, fire precaution, staffing and quality of care to the residents before they are allowed to operate," the spokesman said.

"The ordinance aims to regulate homes established for the residential care of elderly persons who have attained the age of 60 so as to ensure that these homes provide services of a reasonable standard and that the well-being of the elderly residents is safeguarded.

"Section 6 of the ordinance, which is scheduled to come into force on April 1, 1996, stipulates that any person, who on any occasion operates, keeps, manages or otherwise has control of a residential care home in respect of which neither a licence nor a certificate of exemption has been issued, commits an offence and is liable to a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment of two years."

Enquiries concerning licensing requirements as well as application procedures can be made on either 2961 7211 or 2834 7414.

End

### Fully treated water flows into Sham Tseng and nearby areas

\* \* \* \* \*

Fully treated drinking water will be gushing through the taps of hundreds of households in Sham Tseng, Tsing Lung Tau and Ma Wan Island on Thursday (December 28).

This has been made possible by the completion of the first phase of the Water Supplies Department's water treatment works in Sham Tseng.

"With the commissioning of this new treatment plant, consumers in these areas who are now receiving chlorinated water will for the first time be supplied with fully treated water," a spokesman for the department said today (Monday).

"The Sham Tseng Water Treatment Works is a two-stage programme using primary and secondary processes of clarification and filtration as a means of achieving optimum water quality.

"The quality of water is systematically monitored by means of chemical and bacteriological testing of water samples taken to ensure that the final water supplied to the consumers complies fully with the Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality recommended by the World Health Organization," he said.

Stage I of the project, which has now been completed, costs \$97 million and is able to provide 23,000 cubic metres of treated water per day. Stage II of the project, which is now being designed, will increase the treated water capacity to 36,500 cubic metres per day when completed to meet future demand.

End

### More counters to receive CNP applications

\* \* \* \* \*

The six Local Control Offices (LCOs) of the Environmental Protection Department will be accepting applications for Construction Noise Permits (CNPs) starting January 2, 1996.

"Instead of having to make all applications at the Quarry Bay Office, relevant trades from January 2 can hand in applications for CNPs at the relevant LCO responsible for the district where the construction work is to be carried out," a Principal Environmental Protection Officer, Mr Steven Ho, said.

To facilitate the processing of their applications, he reminded applicants to arrange payment of the application fees by cheque when handing in their applications. The current application fee is \$150.

The districts covered by the LCOs and their respective enquiry numbers are as follows -

| <u>LCOs</u>     | <u>Districts covered</u>                     | <u>Enquiry Tel</u> |
|-----------------|--|--------------------|
| Territory East  | Kwun Tong , Sai Kung,<br>Wong Tai Sin        | 2707 7552          |
| Territory South | Hong Kong Island and Islands                 | 2516 1733          |
| Territory West  | Tuen Mun, Yuen Long                          | 2411 9635          |
| Territory North | Sha Tin, Tai Po, North                       | 2634 3805          |
| Urban East      | Sham Shui Po, Kowloon City,<br>Yau Tsim Mong | 2402 5252          |
| Urban West      | Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing                        | 2417 6110          |

Application forms and information pamphlets on CNPs are available at all the LCOs.

End

Statutory holiday reminder

\* \* \* \* \*

The Labour Department today (Monday) reminded employers that January 1, 1996 (Monday) is one of the 11 statutory holidays for employees.

Under the Employment Ordinance, all employees, irrespective of their wage levels, are entitled to statutory holidays and must be paid for the day off if they have worked continuously for the same employer for three months or longer before the statutory holiday.

Holiday pay should be equivalent to an employee's earnings on a full working day and should include basic wages as well as allowances that can be expressed in money terms such as meals and cost of living allowances.

Where the earnings vary from day to day, holiday pay should be the average daily earnings during every complete wage period, which could be between 28 and 31 days, preceding the holiday.

If an employee is required to work on a statutory holiday, he must be given an alternative day off within 60 days before or after the holiday.

Enquiries about statutory holidays may be made at the Labour Department's General Enquiry Telephone Service on 2717 1771.

End

Study on propensity for office decentralisation

\* \* \* \* \*

The Planning Department has signed an agreement commissioning a firm to undertake a study to investigate the propensity for office decentralisation and to formulate an office land development strategy.

"The objective of the study is to identify the trends and key factors in determining the locations of commercial and government offices," a spokesman for the Planning Department said today (Tuesday).

"Based on the findings of the study, an office planning strategy will be formulated to set out the spatial distribution pattern of commercial and government offices of the territory for the year 2011, with particular emphasis on locations in the non-central business district areas, and the policy and institutional mechanisms necessary to enable its implementation," he said.

The study, comprising two surveys, will identify the mover type of offices and the pull and push factors which affect the propensity for office decentralisation.

Selected property developers, business firms and business organisations will also be interviewed to solicit their views on office development in non-metropolitan areas.

It will also assess the need for additional government office floor space up to the year 2011 and the possibility of new government offices taking the lead in office decentralisation.

The study will take about 14 months to complete.

"The concentration of office development on both sides of Victoria Harbour is one of the main reasons for traffic congestion during peak hours.

"It is hoped that the study will identify the opportunities for decentralising office," the spokesman added.

End

### Appeal to remove defective advertising signs

\* \* \* \* \*

The Buildings Department today (Tuesday) urged property and shop owners to take the initiative to remove poorly maintained or abandoned advertising signs for public safety.

The Senior Structural Engineer (Dangerous Buildings) of the department, Mr Robinson Chung, made the appeal in the light of a recent clearance operation carried out by the department to remove a number of abandoned advertising signs in Mong Kok.

Mr Chung said these signs were found to be potentially dangerous during a district-wide survey on advertising signs started in Mong Kok in September this year.

"So far we have inspected more than 1,600 signs in the area and 45 of them were found to be defective. They will be removed by the Buildings Department and the removal cost will be recovered from the owners.

"The survey on advertising signs will continue and similar clearance operations will be carried out in other districts," he said.

Mr Chung added that the department was enlisting the support of District Boards in conducting large-scale district-based clearance operations.

"In each operation, the department carries out systematic inspections and searches out any overhanging signboards which pose a threat to public safety.

"So far, the response from the District Boards has been encouraging and the operations are successful," he said.

Noting that public safety was the Government's prime concern, Mr Chung pointed out that it was the property or shop owners' responsibility to ensure safe installation and maintenance of advertising signs.

"There are more than 180,000 advertising signs in the territory and the figure increases by about six per cent each year.

"Before putting up overhanging signboards, people should seek professional advice for safe design and maintenance. They must also ensure that the signs are properly maintained after installation," he said.

Members of the public could also make reports to the Buildings Department if they find any advertising signs which are posing danger to public safety, Mr Chung said.

The 24-hour Building Safety hotline is 2626 1234.

End

#### Builders' lifts safety ordinance to take effect this weekend

\* \* \* \* \*

The Builders' Lifts and Tower Working Platforms (Safety) Ordinance, which aims to strengthen the safety of such installations on construction sites, will become effective from Saturday (December 30).

The ordinance provides a comprehensive control over the design, construction, maintenance, testing, examination and operation of builders' lifts and tower working platforms.

Under the ordinance, owners of these installations would be required to retain the services of a registered contractor to carry out any erection, dismantling or maintenance of their equipment, a spokesman for the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) said today (Tuesday).

"The registered contractor is required by law to notify EMSD of any installations to be carried out or modified.

"He is also required to employ a registered examiner to carry out test and examination after completion of installation or after major alterations," the spokesman added.

Application for operation of the equipment should be submitted to EMSD for approval before the equipment is put into use or re-use.

The registered contractor should carry out weekly maintenance and keep a log book which may be examined by EMSD and arrange for testing and examination of the installation by a registered examiner every six months.

The contractors and examiners have to be registered with EMSD.

The spokesman pointed out that the ordinance had empowered the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services to monitor the use and operation of builders' lifts and tower working platforms, to stop the use of unsafe installations, to enter construction sites to inspect the installations and to investigate accidents in connection with the installations.

"Anyone breaching the safety requirements specified in the ordinance is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and imprisonment for 12 months," he said.

Meanwhile, EMSD has produced a bilingual pamphlet entitled "Safe Use of A Builder's Lift and Tower Working Platform" to promote the safe use of these installations.

Copies of the pamphlet have been distributed to various trade associations and institutions. They are also available free of charge at all District Offices of the Home Affairs Department.

End

#### Invisible effort behind-the-"screens"

\* \* \* \* \*

It is a really comfy and snugly thing to sit in front of your television and view your favourite television programme, especially after a hard day's work.

But you may not be aware that the impeccably clear vision in front of you requires the hard work of others.

"It is our duty to regulate the use of radio communication equipment and to ensure that the reception of television programmes is free from unwanted interference," said a Senior Controller of Telecommunications, Mr Andrew Tang of the Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA).

It is not strange to us that OFTA is in charge of regulation and licensing of telecommunications services. But it also looks after the technical regulation of television and sound broadcasting services and prepares plans for the installation of new transposers in order to improve coverage.

Mr Tang continued: "We have a Radio Monitoring Unit to investigate complaints concerning poor reception of television and sound broadcasting services.

"Every day the unit receives calls concerning interference to telecommunication network and broadcasting reception from the public. Its six mobile monitoring teams act on interference complaints including TV reception interference."

In order to cater to those television viewers who will only be at home in the evening, one of the mobile teams works from 4 pm to 11 pm Monday to Friday except public holidays.

The interference complaint hotline, telephone 2389 8131, operates round-the-clock. From 8 am to 11 pm staff of the unit will answer enquiries and handle complaints. For calls received by the recording machine after 11 pm, they will be handled the following day.

Listening to complainants' grumble is a humdrum job, it may seem. But to the unit, it needs specialised consideration as the staff have to decide what steps to be taken when receiving complaints over the phone.

They have to try to get as much information as possible from the complainants to screen out those complaints which are caused by faulty audio-visual equipment rather than radio interference.

Experience has shown that around 80 per cent of the complaints reported are caused by deficiencies and fault in the television sets or by inadequate or badly set-up aerials.

"So, when a complainant lodges a complaint over the phone, we will ask him a few simple questions, usually on the 'symptoms' the television set has. Some problems can be solved just by giving the complainant advice over the phone.

"Among the complaints we receive, the most common symptoms are multiple pictures such as 'ghosting' or grainy picture, as often referred to as 'snow'," a Controller of Telecommunications of the unit, Mr Tam Kwong-ming, said.

If your television set has the above symptoms, experienced Tam can give you some tips to remedy the situation.

"You may adjust the direction in which the aerial is pointing or tune the television receiver to obtain better vision. If the problem still exists, you'd better have to consult your radio dealer or aerial installer," he said.

Yet sometimes the problem you have may not be that simple.

For example, images of two channels appear on the screen at the same time, uneven bands of spots or "mesh fabric" pattern come into sight which you find disturbing.

"Don't worry. All you have to do is to report the case to us and we will follow it up as soon as possible," said Mr Tam with a smile, "It's always our pleasure to help the public to solve problems."

Upon receipt of complaints of that nature, the unit will request the complainant to fill in a form on television reception interference in order to obtain more information on the case before carrying out on-site investigation.

The form will be sent to complainants either by fax or by mail.

"We usually will send the mobile monitoring team to investigate within three days after receiving the form," Mr Tam added.

"In case like that, only on-site investigation can locate the source of interference, specially with the help of the portable spectrum analyser."

With regard to the spectrum analyser, staff of the unit have a mixed bag of feelings with this 30-pound equipment.

"The analyser is really great and useful as it can locate the source of interference which cannot be detected by equipment in our radio monitoring station," Mr Tam said.

"However, it weighs a ton. We will be out of breath after taking it through several storeys of a building which does not have any lift!" a staff of the unit said.

"On-site investigation is no easy task. Difficulty mounts when the rooftop has hundreds of aerials standing to greet you.

"No doubt, investigation will be much easier if the building has stalled communal aerial."

It usually takes the mobile monitoring team a half day to complete the investigation of a complaint.

Despite the long time taken to complete a case, the unit can still provide a high standard of service and achieve its performance targets.

For 1994-95, over 90 per cent of the cases are investigated within 10 working days. To live up to the slogan "Serving the Community", higher targets are set out for 1995-96.

"We hope that 95 per cent of the cases would be investigated within 10 days," Mr Tang said.

End

#### New Year holiday clinic service

\* \* \* \* \*

Eight general out-patient clinics will remain open between 9 am and 1 pm on Sunday (December 31) and Monday (January 1), which are the New Year's Eve and the first week-day in January, the Department of Health announced today (Tuesday).

They are - the Violet Peel Health Centre and Shau Kei Wan Jockey Club Clinic on Hong Kong Island; the Kwun Tong Jockey Club Health Centre, Robert Black Health Centre and Yau Ma Tei Jockey Club Clinic in Kowloon; the Lady Trench Polyclinic, Shek Wu Hui Jockey Club Clinic and Yuen Long Jockey Club Health Centre in the New Territories.

All other general out-patient and evening clinics will be closed on these two days.

End