



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, October 19, 1973

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NEW RENT CONTROL SCHEME

All Existing Post-War Flats Protected

All existing post-war domestic premises, regardless of their rateable value, are to be provided security of tenure up to the end of November 1976.

At the same time, to encourage private developers to contribute as much as possible to the overall housing programme, tenancies in new buildings certified for occupation after the enactment of new control legislation will not be subject to control.

Certain other types of tenancies, such as those held from the Hong Kong Housing Authority, the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Hong Kong Model Housing Society, are also excluded.

Details of the new control legislation are set out in the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) (Amendment) (No.2) Bill, published in today's gazette.

Under its provisions, landlords and tenants are free to negotiate any increase in rents by agreement at any time.

Otherwise the landlord is only permitted to increase the rent by a fair amount not exceeding 21 per cent one year after the last increase or after the commencement of the tenancy if the premises are let before the enactment of the legislation; or two years from the date of tenancy if the premises are let after the enactment.

Such an increase will control the rent at the new figure for a period of two years, even if the period should extend beyond November 1976, after the legislation expires.

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The amount of increase, other than that privately agreed between the landlord and the tenant, will be determined by the Commissioner of Rating and Valuation on application by the landlord for a certificate.

The increase will be the difference between the existing rent and the fair market rent divided by the factor five, but not exceeding 21 per cent of the existing rent.

For example:

(1) Fair Market Rent	\$900 per month excluding rates
Existing Rent	<u>\$600</u> " " " "
Difference	$\$300 \div 5 = \60 -- permitted increase
(2) Fair Market Rent	\$1,400 per month excluding rates
Existing Rent	<u>\$600</u> " " " "
Difference	$\$800 \div 5 = \160

But 21 per cent of the existing rent (\$600) is \$126. The permitted increase is \$126.

The fair market rent will be that considered to be reasonable at the time, taking all relevant rental information into consideration.

The landlord of premises not let on the date of enactment of the legislation will be able to negotiate freely a rent with his tenant. The rent of premises re-let after the enactment will however be limited to the fair market rent as assessed by the Commissioner.

For subtenants, the rate of rent increase will generally follow that paid by the principal tenant but again cannot exceed 21 per cent of the existing rent except by agreement.

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However, the full amount of rates increase if any may be passed on to tenants and sub-tenants.

The landlord may apply to the District Court to repossess the premises if he wants to house himself or his immediate family or if he intends to rebuild it.

But he will only be able to obtain possession for his own use if he has become the landlord before the legislation is enacted.

In such cases where the premises are to revert to the use of the landlord or his immediate family, the court must be satisfied that no greater hardship to the tenant would be caused by granting the application.

Once the premises have been regained, other than for rebuilding, the landlord will not be allowed to sell or let the premises within two years unless he has obtained the consent of the court.

His former tenant can also recover compensation for loss or damage if he has regained the premises by mis-representation or concealment of material facts.

The amending Bill, if passed, will replace the "rent freeze" legislation introduced last June and the provisions of the Rent Increases (Domestic Premises) Control Ordinance which has been incorporated as Part II of the principal ordinance.

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TOUGHER CONTROLS ON SMOKE POLLUTION

More stringent controls are to be exercised over the emission of dust or grit from industrial furnaces, ovens, flues and chimneys.

These are provided in a new set of regulations - the Clean Air (Restriction and Measurement of Smoke Emission) Regulations 1973 - published in today's gazette. The regulations will come into effect on January 1, 1974.

The regulations will apply to all premises where liquid oil, solid fuel, gas, electricity or other fuels are used which give rise to the emission of dust, grit or smoke.

The Assistant Commissioner of Labour, Mr. David Lin explained that if grit and dust emitted from any industrial plant was found to be in excess of the statutory limits, the occupier would be liable to a fine of \$5,000 plus a daily fine of \$50 if the offence continued.

"An occupier who is given 60 days notice will have to install specified sampling points on his premises to enable officers from the Labour Department to take samples of dust or grit and to measure the density of smoke," he said.

"The occupier will also have to ensure safe access to the sampling points and to keep them in good conditions."

Section five of the regulations sets a fine of \$5,000 for the use of liquid fuel with a viscosity exceeding 120 seconds Redwood No. 1, unless the occupier has obtained prior permission from the Commissioner of Labour.

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"Permission would only be granted if the Commissioner is satisfied that the use of such fuel would not result in the emission of dark smoke," Mr. Lin said.

He added that most likely domestic premises and restaurants would not be affected by this particular section because the liquid fuels commonly used on such premises were kerosene, gas oil or diesel fuel oil, which had a viscosity well below 120 seconds Redwood No. 1.

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FUN FAIR FOR TSUEN WAN CHILDREN

A day of fun and games has been planned for hundreds of children in Tsuen Wan on Sunday (October 21) at the Social Welfare Department's Princess Alexandra Community Centre.

The fair will be held under the auspices and on the initiative of the Children Members Council - the co-ordinating body of all children groups of the Centre.

Mr. Alexander Fung, Warden of the Centre, said the children members had been given a free hand in organizing the programmes.

The fun fair will last from 2.30 to 5.30 p.m. in the afternoon.

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Note to Editors: Reporters and photographers are welcome to cover the function.

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ERIC HO APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF HOME AFFAIRS

The appointment of Mr. E.P. Ho as Director of Home Affairs is announced in today's government gazette.

He will head the Home Affairs Department, which includes the City District Offices.

The change in title of the Secretariat of Home Affairs follows the recent re-organisation of the Colonial Secretariat as a result of which the Secretary for Home Affairs now heads the Home Affairs and Information Branch of the Colonial Secretariat, but is no longer responsible for the everyday management of the department.

Mr. Ho has had a long and distinguished career in the public service, having served in a number of senior posts in various government departments. His last post was in the Commerce and Industry Department, where he recently acted as Director for some six months.

Born in Hong Kong, Mr. Ho received his early schooling in St. Joseph's College until the outbreak of the war. In 1946, he won the government's scholarship to the University of Hong Kong where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1950.

On graduation, he was selected for training under the Colonial Welfare and Development Scheme and underwent three years' training with the Board of Inland Revenue, London.

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He returned to Hong Kong in 1954 and joined the Inland Revenue Department as an Assessor. Since then he has served as Assistant Secretary of the then Secretariat for Chinese Affairs; Assistant Secretary, Colonial Secretariat; Assistant Financial Secretary; Assistant Director of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department; and Deputy Director of the Commerce and Industry Department.

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Note to Editors: Copies of Mr. Ho's photograph are distributed separately in the GIS Press boxes.

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ONE WORKER INJURED EVERY SEVEN MINUTES

EMPLOYERS URGED TO JOIN GOVT IN PREVENTING ACCIDENTS

One person in Hong Kong is now being injured at work every seven or eight minutes throughout the working day, the Commissioner of Labour, Mr. I.R. Price, said today.

"During the average working day, there will be some 80 such accidents, some horrifyingly severe in the mutilation they will cause," he said, "and almost certainly, one will kill."

Mr. Price was officially opening a one-day safety seminar organised by the Chinese Manufacturers Association and attended by 80 management representatives from 55 leading Hong Kong firms.

He said this accident rate was taking an incalculable toll in human suffering, and leaving Hong Kong industry and commerce with a staggering damage bill each year.

Last year, he said, 296 people were killed and 29,350 injured at work. The total cost to management of the accidents was well over \$200 million.

Mr. Price called on management and workers to form a united front with the government to fight to prevent accidents at work.

He said that in the past, the Labour Department had been fighting almost a lone battle in the field of industrial safety.

"Employers, managers and workers have looked too much to intervention by government, and too little to their own interests, responsibilities and possible efforts," he said.

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"The only way in which the accident rates can be reduced is for top management to take a closer interest in this important matter and to ensure that all levels of employees, supervisors and managers are properly instructed in accident prevention."

He emphasised that the promotion of safety was an important function of good management. "Accidents do not just happen," he said. "They are caused by unsafe acts." In fact 85 per cent of all so-called "accidents" resulted from acts which could have been prevented.

Mr. Price said too few managers had seriously tried to assess the total problem of accidents in their firms, and to identify the underlying causes and quantify the costs.

Managements should concentrate on anticipating accidents and preventing them, rather than trying to cure the problem after an accident had happened. He said possible hazards should be analysed in detail, and suitable prevention methods and safety techniques worked out.

It was the government's main responsibility to enact and enforce safety regulations. Seven special sets of safety regulations had been made in recent years, and another ten or so were now in the pipeline.

But employers should ensure safe working conditions were complied with, and employees should take an active interest in their own well-being by making full use of safety guards and safety precautions.

He pointed out that some of Hong Kong's leading industrialists had already acknowledged the importance of work safety in the job standards set by the Industrial Training Advisory Committee - forerunner of the recently-appointed Hong Kong Training Council.

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Of the 133 job standards prepared by the industrialists on its various committees, 104 included requirements for safety knowledge.

Mr. Price praised the Chinese Manufacturers Association for its initiative in staging the safety seminar, and called on other manufacturing and employers' associations to follow its lead.

The Commissioner announced that the government and industry were combining to stage Hong Kong's first major industrial safety exhibition, to be held in the Chinese Manufacturers Association pavilion during this year's CMA Fair from December 11 to January 8.

"As far as we can gather, this will be the first such exhibition in South-East Asia," he said. The Labour Department was organising the exhibition with the help of the Commerce and Industry, Marine and Fire Services departments.

He said: "It represents a wide-scale joint effort, with the backing of the C.M.A., other employers' groups and organisations, individual employers large and small, insurance companies and leading shipping companies.

"All these have contributed most generously to the cost of staging this large exhibition. This makes it even more of a 'first' and a milestone in the history of safety in Hong Kong."

He noted that many firms had lent their machinery for the exhibition, and some had even lent their staff to man the machinery.

"It is my sincere hope that this first combined attack on the problem of accidents at work will lead to an era of co-operation which will be of benefit to all -- management, workers and government," Mr. Price said.

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Note to Editors: Copies of the full text of Mr. Price's speech are boxed for collection.

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SECURITY CLOSED CIRCUIT TV SYSTEMS TO BE EXEMPT FROM LICENSING

A Bill to amend the Telecommunication Ordinance is published in the gazette today for public information.

The Bill will be tabled in the Legislative Council shortly and, if passed, will enable closed circuit television systems which are operated by persons for internal information or security purposes within their own premises to be owned and operated without a licence.

It will also provide exemption from licensing for persons operating such systems for private entertainment purposes in their own homes. None of these unlicensed systems will be permitted to carry paid commercial advertising.

Commenting on the Bill, the Television Authority, Mr. Nigel Watt, said today the amending legislation was needed because of the impending expiry on October 31 of the present monopoly wired television franchise which provides the legal framework for all existing closed circuit television installations in Hong Kong.

"If the amending Bill is passed into law it is intended that regulations will be made to provide for the licensing of closed circuit television systems which extend beyond individual premises - for example a stock exchange information system or a security system linking up various offices in separate buildings.

"These larger licensed systems", Mr. Watt added, "will also be limited to an information or security use and will not be permitted to carry any entertainment material or any paid advertising.

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"However, it is intended that the regulations should permit the Telecommunications Authority to issue closed circuit television licences to enable hotels to screen entertainment films on television sets in the hotel guest rooms, subject to such films having passed censorship and subject to no paid commercial advertising being included in the programme," he said.

It is expected that regulations will also be published at the same time to enable licences to be issued to operators of broadcast relay systems.

Commenting on this aspect, Mr. Watt said: "It will be recalled that the government has already legislated to provide for the installation, without a licence, of communal television aerials on the roofs of single buildings, where cables do not have to cross public streets."

Once this legislation becomes effective, these aerial distribution systems will require no licence although they will be liable to inspection by the Telecommunications Authority to ensure that they do not cause interference with other communication systems. Such systems will not be permitted to change the input frequency.

"However, the proposed broadcast relay licences," Mr. Watt explained, "will permit licensees to connect up buildings for relay purposes and to convert the input frequencies to lower frequencies for the ease of transmission of signals along the longer cables in such systems.

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"Broadcast relay licensees will be obliged to provide subscribers with a simultaneous uninterrupted relay of the output of all wireless television stations in Hong Kong. They may also relay, if they so wish, the output of sound broadcasting stations. A relay licensee will be limited to the role of a distributor of other people's programmes. He will not be allowed to carry anything other than these programmes along his cables and will not have any interest in programme origination or in the sale of advertising time," Mr. Watt said.

It is intended that broadcast relay and closed circuit television licences will be available to all applicants who comply with the licensing conditions and a nominal annual fee to cover the administrative cost of licensing will be charged.

Meanwhile, development in all forms of cable communications are moving at a very fast pace in many parts of the world and a government working group has been established to examine these developments and to consider other possible future uses of cable communications in Hong Kong.

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IMMIGRATION ASSISTANTS TOLD TO WORK WITH CLEAR CONSCIENCE

Every civil servant must work for the community with a clear conscience to make Hong Kong "a clean city - not only superficially but also thoroughly," Urban Councillor, Dr. Denny Huang said today.

Addressing immigration assistants at a passing-out parade this morning, Dr. Huang urged the graduating officers to be scrupulous about their words and manners when dealing with members of the public and overseas visitors.

Coldness and rudeness would affect not only the reputation of an individual but also that of the whole organisation and of the government, he said.

Dr. Huang impressed on the officers to retain their integrity and be impartial, courteous, and considerate "for such is the least attitude possessed by a civil servant."

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Note to Editors: Copies of the full text of Dr. Huang's speech are boxed for collection.

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WARNING ON SALE OF BOGUS ADVERTISING SPACE

The Director of Fire Services today made it quite clear that no fire service personnel of any rank is authorised to solicit advertisement for any fire service publication.

He was commenting on reports that persons alleging to be Fire Service Officers were soliciting advertisements for 'fire service publications' from factory and shop owners.

"Any attempt to solicit such advertising should be reported at once either to the police or to the Fire Services Department," he said.

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Release Time: 7.45 p.m.