

**HONG KONG
GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
SERVICES**

**DAILY
INFORMATION
BULLETIN**

Tuesday, June 27, 1972

TEMPORARY RATE EXEMPTIONS

For Buildings Officially Closed By Rainstorms

Owners of all buildings or flats which are uninhabitable as a result of official closure orders following the recent rainstorms are not required to pay any rates until further notice.

The Commissioner of Rating and Valuation, Mr. R.A. Fry, said today these properties comprise 300 flats in the Mid-Levels, the Peak, and in Wun Sha Street, Tai Hang, and in Kowloon.

They also include the collapsed or damaged buildings at No. 11 Kotewall Road, Nos. 38 to 40 Kotewall Road, No. 21 Po Shan Road and No. 2 Bullock Lane, Wan Chai.

Mr. Fry said the assessments for rates for the third quarter for all these properties have been cancelled with effect from July 1.

"However", he said, "due to computerised distribution of rate demands, many of these notices have already been posted. Owners of officially closed buildings should ignore these demands."

"The Rating and Valuation Department will shortly be sending out notices of cancellation of rates assessments. Ratepayers affected should not be worried if they do not receive these notices."

/s/ Owners

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"Owners of closed buildings are advised to note that when closure orders are lifted, their premises will be re-assessed for rates from the first day of the month following the removal of the closure orders."

Occupiers of flats in the Mid-Levels district, who moved out of their premises recently although their buildings were not affected by closure orders, are liable for payment of rates. Mr. Fry pointed out that he has no authority to cancel the assessments. Rates demand notes are now being sent to existing addresses.

The Commissioner added: "Any ratepayer wishing to claim a refund of rates on account of vacancy may do so by giving me due notice in writing not later than July 15. It is important to note that rates cannot be refunded unless they are paid on time during July and the premises have been vacant for an entire month.

"A flat will be considered vacant only where it is entirely clear of personal belongings and furniture."

Ratepayers of such premises who wish to apply for a refund, or who may have any enquiries concerning the refund procedure, should telephone H-249021 and ask to speak to the Officer-in-charge of the Refund of Rates Section of the Rating and Valuation Department. Explanatory leaflets on rates refund procedure are available.

Ratepayers who have not yet received demand notes for rates for the third quarter of this year are asked to enquire at the Treasury in Ice House Street.

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Lists of cancelled assessments can be inspected at the following places:

Rating and Valuation Department,
No. 1, Garden Road.

The Treasury and all Sub-Treasuries

City District Offices and Public Enquiry Centres.

The Western Police Station Enquiry Centre.

Owners of closed buildings requiring further information regarding the payment of rates should contact Mr. Lo Yau-cheuk, the Area Valuer in charge of the Mid-Levels district. His telephone is H-249021 Extensions 59 and 64.

Mr. M.P.W. Tristram, Superintending Valuer in charge of Hong Kong Island, will also be available to answer enquiries. His telephone number is H-249021 Extension 56.

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DEATH SENTENCE COMMUTED

The Governor, after taking into consideration the advice of the Executive Council, has decided that the death sentence passed on August 23, 1971 on Chau Kam-cheung should be commuted to a term of 25 years imprisonment.

Chau Kam-cheung was found guilty of the murder of Wong Pik-wan.

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SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR SHIPBREAKING

A new set of safety procedures recommended for the ship breaking industry in Hong Kong has been drawn up by three Government departments - Marine, Labour and Fire Services.

Known as "Guide to Safety Practice for the Shipbreaking Industry" it was formally handed over to representatives of the industry by Mr. A.J. Lack, Principal Marine Officer.

Mr. Lack said the purpose of the guide was to draw attention to particular dangers inherent in the work of shipbreaking for the benefit of the workers and all others concerned.

He said it was designed to help owners of vessels to prepare their own safety instructions. They were advised that whilst applying the recommendations, due regard should be paid to the relevant safety regulations and the statutory requirements of the Hong Kong Government.

Mr. Lack added: "There is a need for guidance in this field, particularly for foremen as they are responsible not only to management but also to employees."

"It is hoped that managements will post the guide in offices and that foremen and workers will keep it at their places of work," he said.

It was impossible for the guide to cover every conceivable situation, but it was very comprehensive and included subjects concerning procedures recommended for safe practice on vessels being prepared for or under demolition.

Mr. Lack stressed that it was now up to management in the shipbreaking industry to train their workers to reasonable standards of safety.

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In this respect, he noted that the Labour Department had offered facilities for the training of supervisors in industrial safety practices and the Fire Services Department also had run courses on fire prevention.

"It is sincerely hoped that all concerned in the shipbreaking industry will take advantage of these training and instruction courses.

"We look forward to receiving from the industry recommendations based on their experience for inclusion in future editions of the guide. It must also be noted that in the absence of legislation, the use of the guide is purely voluntary," Mr. Lack said.

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QUEENSWAY TO BE REALIGNED

The Public Works Department is proposing to widen and realign the whole of Queensway and parts of Murray Road and Queen's Road East.

The project is to eliminate the double bend at Queensway near the Naval Terrace. This bend of 122 degrees has a very high accident rate.

The improvement scheme also includes the construction of a footbridge across Queensway.

An announcement has been made in the Government Gazette and anyone objecting to the proposal should do so by July 23. Claims for compensation should be made by August 23.

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PARKING METER CHARGES

Higher rates for parking meters, announced recently by the Financial Secretary, are not likely to come into force until later this year, and the changes will not be applied simultaneously to all existing meters.

The revised rates will be charged when new meters calibrated to the higher rates begin to arrive and are progressively installed.

In the mean time, the existing rates and hours of operation remain in force.

The Commissioner for Transport, Mr. B.D. Wilson, said today that as new meters arrive and as existing ones are converted, the metal plates on the meters, outlining the rates and hours of operation, will be changed to make the position clear.

As there are likely to be meters with differing rates and hours of operation, motorists should examine the metal plates carefully before using the meters.

Apart from higher charges, the Executive Council has approved the extension of meter hours up till midnight, and the operation of meters on Sundays and public holidays.

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URBAN COUNCIL SWIMMING COURSES

Special swimming courses are being organised this summer at public swimming pools managed by the Urban Council.

The Hong Kong Amateur Swimming Association and the Education Department are both assisting with the project in which there will be both a beginners course and an intermediate course.

The aim of the beginners course is to teach non-swimmers the basic movements in swimming and breathing. The intermediate course is a continuation of this programme and is designed to improve the learner's techniques and to teach him personal survival in the water.

The swimming courses, the first ever organised by the Recreation and Amenities Select Committee of the Urban Council, are mainly for office and factory workers and children who do not have the opportunity to undertake swimming with their schools.

Classes will be given only on week-day evenings and at weekends. Two series of courses will be provided, each lasting for five weeks.

The first series will begin on July 10 and will be held at the Lei Cheng Uk, Kowloon Tsai and Kwun Tong swimming pools. Fees range from \$2 for children under 14 to \$10 for adults over 18.

Application forms are available from all public swimming pools and City District Offices in Kowloon and these should be completed and returned to either of the three swimming pool offices by Monday, July 3.

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HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS - POSTAL, CITY HALL

There will be no mail deliveries on Saturday (July 1) and all post offices will be closed because of the public holiday.

The City Hall Low Block, including the two restaurants and the Memorial Garden will remain open as usual.

The City Hall Library and the branch libraries at Yau Ma Tei, Waterloo Road and Aberdeen/Pok Fu Lam will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Kowloon Park Students' Study Room will be closed.

The City Museum and Art Gallery will be open from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. and the Lei Cheng Uk Museum from 12 noon - 7 p.m.

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SIU LAM HOSPITAL OPENING

Note to editors: The Siu Lam Hospital for severe mental patients will be formally opened by Sir Kenneth Fung Ping-fan, in Tai Lam Valley at 4 p.m. tomorrow.

It is the first hospital of its kind built with a grant of \$5.7 million from the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club.

Members of the press, radio and television are invited to have the ceremony covered. Transport will be provided. A 14-seater AM2126 will leave Kowloon sub-pool behind the Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office at 2.45 p.m. sharp. A G.I.S. man will accompany the reporters.

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PIPELINE FOR DESALINATION PLANT

The Government plans to construct a tunnel and pipelines in the Yuen Long District in association with the proposed desalting plant near the 17 milestone, Castle Peak Road.

An area at each entrance of the tunnel will be required for ancillary works, including the construction of an access road.

The pipeline will be capable of carrying 60 million gallons of water a day from the plant to the Tai Lam Chung Reservoir.

About 5,000 square feet of private agricultural land will be affected by the project.

Resumption of the land has been ordered by the Governor in Council under the Crown Lands Resumption Ordinance, and a notice has been published in the Government Gazette.

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Release Time: 6.45 p.m.