

# 2021 Population Census to be conducted between June and August next year

The Census and Statistics (2021 Population Census) Order was published in the Gazette today (October 16) to enable the conduct of a population census from June 23 to August 4, 2021.

The Order was made by the Chief Executive in Council under Section 9 of the Census and Statistics Ordinance (Cap 316). Apart from the dates for conducting the 2021 Population Census, the Order specifies also the purpose of the Census, the persons, premises and vessels in respect of which particulars are to be obtained, the persons who are required to give the requisite information, and the deadline for destroying the completed questionnaires. A schedule specifying the matters in respect of which respondents are required to give particulars is included in the Order.

A Government spokesman said, "It is an established practice in Hong Kong to conduct a population census every 10 years. The purpose is to obtain up-to-date benchmark information on the socio-economic characteristics of the population and on its geographical distribution. Such information is a useful reference to the Government for planning and policy formulation, and the private sector and academia for business and research purposes."

The spokesman added, "Households are encouraged to participate in the Census by means of online questionnaires starting from June 23, 2021. Completing the online questionnaire is convenient and secure. Households can submit the requested information anytime and anywhere through the dedicated and secure website using computers or mobile devices."

Households may also choose to provide the requested information by telephone interview or postal return (applicable to "Short Form" questionnaires only). In addition, from July 18 to August 4, 2021, census officers of the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) will visit households who have not yet completed their questionnaires to collect the requested information. In light of the evolving situation of COVID-19, the C&SD will adopt contingency measures to reduce social contact.

"The C&SD will implement strict procedures to protect the privacy of all data collected during the Census on individual persons and households and will only release statistics which will not reveal the identity of the individuals involved," the spokesman said. All completed questionnaires, in both paper and electronic forms, will be destroyed on or before June 22, 2022.

The C&SD will conduct further publicity on the detailed arrangements for the Census after the completion of the legislative procedure for the commencement of the Order.

The Order will be tabled at the Legislative Council for negative vetting next Wednesday (October 21).