

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

M
i
d
d
l
e
B
a
y
B
e
a
c
h

Grade 2 beaches are:

Butterfly Beach	Golden Beach
Cafeteria New Beach	Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Cafeteria Old Beach	Kadoorie Beach
Castle Peak Beach	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Pui O Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Shek O Beach***
Deep Water Bay Beach***	Silver Mine Bay Beach
Discovery Bay	Silverstrand Beach

Grade 3 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach	Casam Beach
Approach Beach	Lido Beach
Big Wave Bay Beach	Ting Kau Beach

* The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced on September 17 that, due to urgent clearance work and maintenance of shark prevention nets after the Typhoon Mangkhut, all beaches in Southern, Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan, Islands and Sai Kung Districts are temporarily closed until further notice.

** Discovery Bay is a non-gazetted beach without lifeguard service.

*** After the typhoon, damage was found at Sai Kung Sewage Treatment Works and some sewage pipes near Deep Water Bay and Tai Tau Chau at Shek O, leading to the discharge of sewage. The public are advised to avoid recreational activities at beaches including Kiu Tsui Beach, Trio Beach, Hap Mun Bay Beach, Deep Water Bay Beach and Shek O Beach where water quality may be affected in the near future.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four

grades according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's websites on Beach Water Quality (www.beachwq.gov.hk and www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Minimum Allowable Wage and food allowance for foreign domestic helpers to increase

The Government announced today (September 28) that the Minimum Allowable Wage (MAW) for foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) in Hong Kong will be increased by 2.5 per cent, from \$4,410 to \$4,520 per month.

Under the Standard Employment Contract for hiring FDHs, employers are required to provide FDHs with food free of charge. At present, the vast majority of employers provide free food to FDHs. Employers may, however, choose to pay a food allowance in lieu. The food allowance will be increased by \$22 (or 2.1 per cent) from not less than \$1,053 to not less than \$1,075 per month.

The new levels of the MAW and the food allowance will apply to all FDH contracts signed on or after tomorrow (September 29).

A Government spokesman said, "The Government reviews the MAW for FDHs regularly. In accordance with the established practice, we have carefully considered Hong Kong's general economic and labour market conditions over the past year, as reflected through a basket of economic indicators, including the relevant income movement and price change in this year's review. The Government has also taken into account Hong Kong's near-term economic outlook, as well as affordability for employers on the one hand and the interests of FDHs on the other, in reaching the decision on the above-mentioned adjustment."

The spokesman added, "The Government has also reviewed the food allowance in lieu of free food, and decided to increase the allowance level."

FDH contracts signed today or earlier at the existing MAW of \$4,410 per month and with food allowance of not less than \$1,053 per month will still be processed by the Immigration Department (ImmD) provided that the applications reach ImmD on or before October 26 (Friday). This arrangement will give employers sufficient time to send the signed contracts to ImmD for completion

of the necessary application procedures.

Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (September 28) that the total assets of the Exchange Fund amounted to HK\$3,993.7 billion as at August 31, 2018, HK\$150.6 billion lower than that at the end of July 2018. Foreign currency assets decreased by HK\$102.6 billion and Hong Kong dollar assets decreased by HK\$48.0 billion.

The decline in foreign currency assets was mainly due to a decrease in unsettled purchases of securities and the sale of US dollars under the Currency Board arrangements. The decline in Hong Kong dollar assets was mainly due to a decrease in Exchange Fund Bills and Notes issued but not yet settled.

The Currency Board Account shows that the Monetary Base at the end of August 2018 was HK\$1,611.2 billion, decreased by HK\$33.9 billion, or 2.1 per cent, from the end of July 2018. The decline was mainly due to a decrease in the balance of the banking system.

The amount of Backing Assets decreased by HK\$30.3 billion, or 1.7 per cent, to HK\$1,765.7 billion. The decrease was mainly due to the sale of US dollars under the Currency Board arrangements, which was partly offset by income from investments. The backing ratio increased from 109.18 per cent at the end of July 2018 to 109.59 per cent at the end of August 2018.

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of September 2018, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

7 September
(Issued)

SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign
Currency Reserve Assets Figures)

14 September (Issued)	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
28 September	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
28 September	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

Special traffic arrangements on Hong Kong Island

Police will implement special traffic arrangements to facilitate a public event to be held on Hong Kong Island this Sunday (September 30).

The following traffic arrangements will be implemented from 2am to 12 noon:

A. Road closure

- Edinburgh Place east of and north of City Hall, except for vehicles leaving from City Hall car park;
- Lung Wo Road, except the slow lane of westbound Lung Wo Road between Tim Wa Avenue and Edinburgh Place;
- Yiu Sing Street; and
- The slow lane of southbound Man Yiu Street from its junction with Lung Wo Road to a point about 40 metres north of the same junction.

B. Traffic diversions

- Traffic along southbound Man Yiu Street cannot turn left to eastbound Lung Wo Road;
- Traffic along southbound Man Yiu Street cannot turn left to eastbound Yiu Sing Street;
- Traffic along eastbound Man Cheung Street cannot enter Lung Wo Road. Affected vehicles will be diverted via Man Yiu Street;
- Traffic along eastbound Man Po Street cannot enter Yiu Sing Street. Affected vehicles will be diverted via Man Yiu Street;
- Traffic along Edinburgh Place east of City Hall cannot enter Lung Wo Road;
- Traffic along northbound Legislative Council Road cannot turn left to westbound Lung Wo Road. Affected vehicles will be diverted via southbound Legislative Council Road;
- Traffic along eastbound Lung Wui Road cannot enter westbound Lung Wo Road;

and

– Traffic along westbound Fenwick Pier Street cannot enter westbound Lung Wo Road.

C. Suspension of parking spaces

Motorcycle parking spaces at the general pick-up/ drop-off and loading/unloading area on Lung Wo Road north of Star Ferry Multi-Storey Car Park will be suspended.

All vehicles parked illegally will be towed away without prior notice.

Actual implementation of the traffic arrangements will be made depending on traffic and crowd conditions in the area. Motorists are advised to exercise tolerance and patience and take heed of instructions of the Police on site.

Residential Mortgage Survey Results for August 2018

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced the results of the residential mortgage survey for August 2018.

The number of mortgage applications in August increased month-on-month by 26.3 per cent to 17 963.

Mortgage loans approved in August increased by 7.7 per cent compared with July to HK\$47.7 billion. Among these, mortgage loans financing primary market transactions increased by 18.7 per cent to HK\$9.4 billion and those financing secondary market transactions decreased by 12.2 per cent to HK\$20.9 billion. Mortgage loans for refinancing increased by 38.7 per cent to HK\$17.3 billion.

Mortgage loans drawn down during August increased by 7.1 per cent compared with July to HK\$32.3 billion.

The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to HIBOR decreased from 94.5 per cent in July to 93.5 per cent in August. The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to best lending rates increased from 3.1 per cent in July to 4.6 per cent in August.

The outstanding value of mortgage loans increased month-on-month by 0.8 per cent to HK\$1,277 billion at end-August.

The mortgage delinquency ratio remained unchanged at 0.02 per cent and the rescheduled loan ratio remained unchanged at nearly 0 per cent.