

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (July 27) released the latest grading of water quality for 38 gazetted beaches and one non-gazetted beach (Discovery Bay) that are open for swimming.

Eighteen beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 18 as Fair (Grade 2) and three as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

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Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach	Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Approach Beach	Kadoorie Beach
Big Wave Bay Beach	Lido Beach
Butterfly Beach	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach
Cafeteria New Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Cafeteria Old Beach	Shek O Beach
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Silver Mine Bay Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Discovery Bay	Stanley Main Beach

Grade 3 beaches are:

Casam Beach	Ting Kau Beach
Castle Peak Beach	

Compared with the grading released last week, Golden Beach has been upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 1 and Silver Mine Bay Beach from Grade 3 to Grade 2. Casam Beach has been changed from Grade 2 to Grade 3.

"The changes are generally within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of the beaches," an EPD spokesman said.

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.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, the EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

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.

FS to visit three cities of Guangdong-HK-Macao Bay Area

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, will visit three cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area (the Bay Area), namely Guangzhou, Foshan and Jiangmen, on July 30 and 31.

He will meet with senior officials of the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Foshan and Jiangmen Municipal Governments, visit local innovation and technology companies, as well as the HKUST LED-FPD Technology R&D Center at Foshan. Co-initiated by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the Nanhai District Government of Foshan City, the Center focuses on technology development of LED (light-emitting diode) and FPD (flat panel display).

Mr Chan will return to Hong Kong in the evening on July 31. During his absence, the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, will act as Financial Secretary.

Producer Responsibility Scheme on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment to be implemented on August

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The Producer Responsibility Scheme on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WPRS), covering air-conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, televisions, computers, printers, scanners and monitors (collectively referred to as regulated electrical equipment, or REE), will come into effect on August 1 (next Wednesday) this year.

The Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, today (July 27) met with representatives of relevant trade associations to review the preparation work by the trade, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and the operator of WEEE€PARK for the implementation of the WPRS.

Mr Wong said, "To prepare for the implementation of the WPRS, the EPD has been maintaining close collaboration with the trade over the past few years and has its support. The Scheme will facilitate the collection of waste electrical and electronic equipment generated locally for proper recycling and turning the items into resources."

Starting August 1 this year, sellers are required to arrange free statutory removal service for customers when they purchase a new item of REE. Sellers are also required to provide a receipt containing the prescribed wording on the recycling levies, and a recycling label. Mr Wong reminded members of the public that they can request the seller to arrange the delivery of a new item and the removal of an item of waste equipment to be done on the same day without additional charge.

In addition to viewing Announcements in the Public Interest on television and posters, members of the public can also visit the thematic website weee.gov.hk to obtain more details about the WPRS. If members of the public have any questions on the implementation arrangement of the WPRS when they purchase a new item of REE, they can contact the relevant seller or call the EPD hotline 2310 0223 for enquiries. A set of frequently asked questions and answers has been set out in the Annex.

Regarding the implementation arrangements of the WPRS, Mr Wong said, "During the early stage of implementation, it may take time for members of the public and the trade to get accustomed to the new arrangements and operational flow. To facilitate the smooth implementation of the scheme, the EPD has asked the operator of WEEE€PARK to gear up for the possible substantial increase in demand for collection services during the initial period. The operator has collaborated with its logistics partners to arrange additional vehicles and manpower to strive to meet the service demands and its performance pledge to deliver the removal service from the fourth working day at the earliest after receiving a service request. We will closely monitor its operation and maintain close liaison with relevant trade organisations."

He added, "At today's meeting, the trade representatives expressed their

support for the scheme. We also agreed to maintain close communication to review the implementation of the WPRS at a suitable juncture."

In the past few months, the EPD conducted 17 briefings for members of the trade, shop visits, and about 20 one-stop-application sessions to facilitate the submission of registration and endorsement applications by the trade. As at July 26 this year, the EPD had received 2 085 applications for endorsement of removal service plans by REE sellers, of which 1 383 had been approved. At the same time, 182 applications had been received for registration as suppliers, of which 149 had been approved. Most of the outstanding applications were received in the past week and the department will process these applications as soon as possible. Sellers and suppliers who have yet to submit applications should take immediate action to file applications.

In addition, in order to enable retailers to better understand the legal requirements, the EPD has sent staff to visit shops selling REE in various districts over the past few months to remind their responsible persons and front-line staff to observe the new legislation. When the legislation comes into force, the EPD will conduct investigations through multiple channels and take enforcement actions against shops which are suspected of breaching the law.

Under the Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) Ordinance, starting August 1 this year, a seller of REE must have a removal service plan (RSP) endorsed by the EPD for selling REE, and must notify consumers in writing of the arrangements of the statutory removal service and the relevant terms of service before entering into a sales contract. A seller should ensure the relevant arrangements have been clearly explained to the customer during the sales process, so that the consumer can make a choice according to his or her own needs. A seller who does not arrange free removal service according to the endorsed RSP commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000 on the first conviction, while a seller who has not notified the consumer according to the legislation is liable to a maximum fine of \$5,000 on the first conviction.

REE sellers must also provide consumers with the corresponding recycling label alongside the sold REE and a receipt showing the prescribed wording on the recycling levies for identifying the REE distributed under the WPRS.

In addition, starting August 1 this year, a supplier of REE must register with the EPD before distributing REE. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000 on conviction.



“HA Risk Alert” latest issue published

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The 50th issue of "HA Risk Alert" is published today (July 27) by the Hospital Authority (HA) as a risk management and communication initiative to further strengthen the reporting and monitoring of medical incidents in public hospitals.

In the first quarter of 2018 (January – March), there were seven Sentinel Events reported, including five cases of retained instruments or other material after surgery/interventional procedure; an inpatient suicide case and an infant abduction case. Among the reported Serious Untoward Events, there were 19 medication incidents and a patient misidentification case.

"Subsequent to incident review and analysis of root causes of these incidents, important lessons on patient safety are identified, while recommendations are made and shared in this publication to avoid similar events in future," the HA spokesperson said.

The publication has been sent via email to all healthcare professionals in public hospitals for continuous quality improvement purposes. It can also be accessed by the public at www.ha.org.hk/riskalert. "HA Risk Alert" is published on a quarterly basis and posted on the HA website every last working Friday in the months of January, April, July and October. The next issue is scheduled on October 26.

Exchange Fund Position at end-June

2018

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) today (July 27) published the unaudited financial position of the Exchange Fund at end-June 2018.

The Exchange Fund recorded an investment income of HK\$27.3 billion in the first half of 2018. The main components were:

- gains on bonds of HK\$19.5 billion;
- losses on Hong Kong equities of HK\$3.4 billion;
- losses on other equities of HK\$2.7 billion;
- positive currency translation effect on non-Hong Kong dollar assets of HK\$5 billion (Note 1); and
- gains on other investments of HK\$8.9 billion (Note 2).

Fees on placements by the Fiscal Reserves and placements by HKSAR government funds and statutory bodies were HK\$22.2 billion (Note 3) and HK\$6.9 billion respectively in the first half of 2018 (the rate of fee payment is 4.6 per cent for 2018). After deducting all expenses and fees, the Accumulated Surplus of the Exchange Fund recorded a decrease of HK\$36.2 billion (Annexes 1 and 2).

Total assets of the Exchange Fund stood at HK\$4,100.7 billion at end-June 2018, an increase of HK\$85.4 billion from the end of 2017.

The global financial markets were very volatile during the first half of the year. At the beginning of the year, the markets were concerned that the US Federal Reserve might quicken the pace of rate hikes on the back of rising inflationary pressures in the US. As a result, yields on the US Treasuries surged, and the global equity markets experienced sharp corrections after reaching new highs at end-January. In particular, the US Dow Jones Industrial Average Index lost 1 175 points in one day, its worst single-day point decline in history. Subsequently, trade tensions between the US and its major trading partners (including China) weighed on market sentiments and added to the global equity market volatility. The US dollar strengthened in the second quarter and asset prices in some emerging markets dropped substantially.

The Chief Executive of the HKMA, Mr Norman Chan, said, "As we have warned at the beginning of the year, asset prices in the global financial markets were in general at their historical highs and the markets might have underpriced some risk factors, including the pace of US interest rate normalisation and the US government's trade policy. These factors could easily trigger significant corrections and volatilities in asset markets."

He added, "Looking ahead, the global investment environment will become even more complex and challenging in the second half of the year. As trade

conflicts between the US and China continue to escalate, trade tensions between the US and other countries are also intensifying. It is hard to predict what will happen next. There are no winners but only losers in trade wars. If the trade wars continue to heat up, the global economy and financial markets will be taking a hit. At the same time, the US Federal Reserve might step up the pace and the magnitude of its monetary policy tightening amid rising inflation, leading to volatility in financial markets. In the face of such an environment, the HKMA will continue to strengthen the Exchange Fund's resilience to market fluctuations through defensive measures and investment diversification."

Note 1: This is primarily the effect of translating foreign currency assets into Hong Kong dollar after deducting the portion for currency hedging.

Note 2: This is the valuation change of investments held by investment holding subsidiaries of the Exchange Fund. This figure represents valuation changes up to the end of March 2018. Valuations of these investments from April to June are not yet available.

Note 3: This does not include the 2018 fee payment to the Future Fund because such amount will only be disclosed when the composite rate for 2018 is available.