

Employer fined \$54,000 for contravening Employees' Compensation Ordinance

The proprietor of a renovation company was prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for violation of the requirements under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (ECO). The proprietor had been convicted at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts earlier and was fined \$54,000 today (August 10).

A worker employed by the proprietor sustained fingers injury while cutting a wood board at work on September 15, 2020, which resulted in amputation of a finger on his left hand. The proprietor failed to pay periodical payments to the injured employee during his period of temporary incapacity on normal paydays or within seven days thereafter as required by the ECO, the amount of which should have been at the rate of four-fifths of the difference between the employee's monthly earnings at the time of the accident and his monthly earnings during the period of temporary incapacity.

"The ruling helps disseminate a strong message to all employers that they have to pay periodical payments to employees who sustain injuries at work within the statutory time limit stipulated in the ECO," an LD spokesman said.

"The LD will not tolerate these offences and will continue to make dedicated efforts in enforcing the law and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," the spokesman added.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, August 10, 2023 is 104.8 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Recruitment arrangement for Government Counsel applicants announced

The Department of Justice today (August 10) reminded potential applicants for the post of Government Counsel (GC) that they are required to

attain requisite results in the Common Recruitment Examination (CRE) and the Basic Law and National Security Law Test (BLNST) in order to qualify for the post.

The GC recruitment exercise will be conducted in late August this year. Applicants will be required to obtain a minimum of a Level 2 result in the Use of English (UE) paper and a Level 1 result in the Use of Chinese (UC) paper of the CRE, as well as a pass result in the BLNST.

In this connection, Level 5 or above in English Language in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination or Grade C or above in Use of English in the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) or Grade C or above in English Language in the General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) are accepted as equivalent to Level 2 in the UE paper of the CRE. Furthermore, Level 4 in Chinese Language in the HKDSE Examination or Grade D in Chinese Language and Culture or Chinese Language and Literature in the HKALE are accepted as equivalent to Level 1 in the UC paper of the CRE. Other equivalent qualifications can also be found at www.csb.gov.hk/english/recruit/cre/949.html.

Under exceptional circumstances a limited number of applicants who do not meet the requisite Chinese language requirement may be appointed subject to the operational needs of the department.

A pass result in the BLNST is an entry requirement for the GC post. Applicants for the GC post are required to obtain a pass result in the BLNST, regardless of whether they have taken any Basic Law Test centrally conducted by the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) or individual bureaux/departments in previous recruitment exercises. Those answering at least 10 out of 20 questions correct will be deemed to have achieved a pass in the BLNST. Only those applicants who have passed the BLNST will be considered for appointment.

The next CRE and BLNST will be held in Hong Kong on October 7 or another date in October if necessary. Prospective GC applicants without the requisite results in the CRE or equivalent and/or those who have not yet attained a pass in the BLNST are invited to apply from August 4 to 17 for sitting the relevant examination and/or test.

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Further information on the CRE and the BLNST is available on the homepage of the CSB (under the "Recruitment" section) at www.csb.gov.hk.

Landlord convicted of overcharging subdivided unit tenant for water

A landlord was convicted today (August 10) of overcharging subdivided

unit (SDU) tenants for water, in contravention of regulation 47 of the Waterworks Regulations (WWR). The landlord pleaded guilty to two counts of offences at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts and was fined \$1,000 for each contravention for a total fine of \$2,000.

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) received a complaint in December 2022 concerning overcharging SDU tenants for water of a flat on Wah Sing Street, Kwai Chung, New Territories. Upon completion of the investigation and evidence collection, prosecution was initiated against the person who contravened the relevant regulation.

The WSD has been making proactive inspections of premises and instituting prosecutions against illegal acts of overcharging SDU tenants for water. This is the ninth similar conviction case since the first conviction in June 2022, with the associated fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

According to the amended regulation 47 of the WWR, the registered consumer of the water account (usually the landlord) is only allowed to recover from the occupants of the premises (usually the tenants) the water charge paid to the WSD. If the amount recovered exceeds the water charge paid to the WSD, the registered consumer shall be guilty of an offence and be liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000.

A WSD spokesman said that the Government is committed to combating illegal acts through an inter-departmental and multi-pronged approach. In addition to stepping up inter-departmental joint inspections and improving the application procedures for the installation of separate water meters, publicity and education efforts have also been strengthened, with a view to enhancing the deterrent effect in preventing SDU tenants from being overcharged for water by the landlord.

The spokesman mentioned that the WSD has launched a scheme and streamlined procedures to help the landlords install separate water meters for SDUs. To encourage landlords' participation in the scheme, payment of the water fee deposit and the charge for providing a meter for each separate water meter installed under the scheme will be waived. Every such water meter account will have a separate water bill for paying water charge, and the first 12 cubic metres of water consumed for each four-month period will be free of charge.

While applications for installing separate water meters in SDUs are to be submitted by the landlords, the SDU tenants can also make a request directly to the WSD. The department will then approach the landlords concerned for follow-up actions and provide appropriate technical support. Details of the scheme can be obtained from the WSD's website (www.wsd.gov.hk/en/customer-services/application-for-water-supply/pilot-scheme-for-installation-of-separate-water-me/index.html).

The WSD encourages the public to report any illegal act of overcharging SDU tenants for water to the WSD for follow-up and investigation. A WhatsApp hotline 5665 5517 has been set up to handle matters related to water

overcharging in SDUs and installation of separate water meters for SDUs. Alternatively, the public can also call the WSD's Customer Enquiry Hotline 2824 5000 to report water overcharge cases. After calling the hotline and choosing a language, they can press "7" for reporting to staff directly.

Red flag hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (August 10) that due to inclement weather, the red flag has been hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at the beach.