

Government Launches “Enhanced Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Property Management Sector”

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) announced today (May 30) that the Government will launch the "Enhanced Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Property Management Sector" (Enhanced ASPM) under the "Anti-epidemic Fund" by extending the subsidised period of the previous ASPM for three months (i.e. June to August 2020) and relaxing the caps on headcounts of the "Anti-epidemic Hardship Allowance" ("AHA") per eligible building block to 100.

"We understand that the epidemic situation may still be fluctuating, and hence the anti-epidemic measures should not be relaxed. Continuous efforts in combating the epidemic would still be required, and the stepping up of cleansing and health protection efforts in properties is essential. Under the Enhanced ASPM, we will extend the subsidised period and relax the caps on headcounts of the 'AHA', with a view to supporting more frontline property management (PM) workers and fighting the virus together," a spokesman from HAD said.

Under the Enhanced ASPM, frontline PM workers who have been performing duties related to security or environmental hygiene in private residential/composite (i.e. commercial cum residential) and industrial/commercial building blocks (including shopping malls) during the subsidised period (i.e. June to August 2020) will be eligible for a monthly "AHA" of \$1,000 for the months in which they have provided service. In other words, if these workers have benefitted from the previous ASPM (covering February to May), they will be eligible for a total "AHA" of \$7,000 for seven months.

"In view of the diverse nature of buildings and modes of management, although the current cap of headcounts of the 'AHA' is sufficient in covering most buildings, with a view to also including larger-scale properties and benefitting more frontline PM workers, the enhanced ASPM will relax the caps on headcounts of the 'AHA' per eligible building block to 100. To avoid abuse, applicants may be required to submit supplementary information when their applications are being processed," the spokesman added.

Furthermore, in addition to the "Anti-epidemic Cleansing Subsidy" ("ACS") of \$2,000 under the ASPM before the enhancement, each eligible private residential/composite building block will be eligible for an extra subsidy of \$2,000 under the Enhanced ASPM (i.e. a total of \$4,000). The amount of the "ACS" given to each eligible industrial/commercial building block will double that for each private residential/composite building block (i.e. a total of \$8,000 during the entire subsidised period under the Enhanced ASPM). The extra "ACS" can continue to alleviate the costs arising from heightened cleansing efforts and the burden on the owners and tenants.

With the extension of the subsidised period and the relaxation of the cap of headcounts, to allow PM companies and owners' organisations (OOs) more time to prepare for the application, the application deadline for the Enhanced ASPM is extended to July 15, 2020. If PM companies and OOs have submitted applications for or their applications have already been approved under the previous ASPM, they do not need to submit a new application for the Enhanced ASPM. HAD or the Property Management Services Authority (PMSA) will contact the PM companies and OOs concerned direct. The application details of the Enhanced ASPM will be announced shortly.

As of May 30, the PMSA has received over 10 000 applications for the previous ASPM, of which around 7 700 applications have been approved. The approved applications involve subsidies of over \$250 million and benefit around 34 000 building blocks and over 64 000 frontline PM workers. Please refer to the website of the PMSA (aspm.pmsahk.org.hk) for the names of the properties for which applications have been approved. For details on the ASPM, please contact the PMSA at 3696 1156 or 3696 1166, or visit the website of the PMSA.