

Housing Authority to pass on rates concession to tenants

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

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) will pass on the rates concession for the four quarters of 2020-21, as set out in the Budget Speech of the Financial Secretary in February, to its domestic and non-domestic tenants starting from April 2020.

"Following approval by the Subsidised Housing Committee of the HA, the apportioned amount of rates concession will be transferred to domestic tenants on a monthly basis over a 12-month period from April 2020 to March 2021 by offsetting an equivalent amount in the rent payable by them, subject to a ceiling of \$1,500 per quarter for each rateable property," a spokesman for the HA said today (March 27). For tenancies that do not cover the entire month, the transfer of the rates concession will be made on a pro-rata basis.

"The rates concession passing-on arrangement will apply to all domestic lettings including interim housing licensees and Comprehensive Social Security Assistance recipients," the spokesman said.

"Similarly, the Commercial Properties Committee (CPC) of the HA approved that the rates concession for the financial year of 2020-21 for the HA's non-domestic properties (excluding carparks) will also be passed on to the non-domestic tenants/licensees on a 'no loss, no gain' principle. Their monthly rates from April 2020 to March 2021 will be waived subject to a ceiling of \$5,000 per quarter in the first two quarters and a ceiling of \$1,500 per quarter in the remaining two quarters for each rateable non-domestic property," the spokesman said.

For the HA's 12 single-operator markets viz. Ching Long, Hung Fuk, Kwai Chung, Lei Muk Shue, Mun Tung, On Tai, Ping Yan, Shek Mun, Shui Chuen O, Tin Yan, Yan Tin and Ying Tung, the operators will also pass on the rates concession to their licensees in full.

"Given the small amount of rates concession to individual carpark users and the significant administrative costs involved for its distribution to these users, the CPC endorsed the exclusion of carparks from this exercise in line with the arrangements for passing on the rates concession in previous exercises. The rates concession for carparks received by the HA would be invested in enhancing the HA's carpark facilities, such as the installation of electric vehicle charging facilities at suitable sites, replacement of energy-efficient lighting to promote environmental protection and upgrading of the security system, etc," the spokesman said.

The maximum total amount of rates concession to be passed on to domestic and non-domestic tenants/licensees by the HA is estimated to be about \$2,599

million and \$58.9 million respectively. They will be individually notified of the arrangements.