

Increase in Minimum Allowable Wage and food allowance for foreign domestic helpers

The Government announced today (September 29) that the Minimum Allowable Wage (MAW) for foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) in Hong Kong will be increased by 3 per cent, from \$4,730 to \$4,870 per month.

In addition, 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 \$40 from not less than \$1,196 to not less than \$1,236 per month.

The new levels of the MAW and food allowance will apply to all FDH contracts signed on or after tomorrow (September 30).

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 well as Hong Kong's near-term economic outlook in this year's review. Taking into account the above, the affordability of employers and the livelihood of FDHs, the Government has decided to adjust the MAW. 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 before today at the existing MAW of \$4,730 per month and with food allowance of not less than \$1,196 per month will still be processed by the Immigration Department (ImmD), provided that the applications reach the ImmD on or before October 27 (Friday). This arrangement will give employers sufficient time to send the signed contracts to the ImmD for completion of the necessary application procedures.