

Increase in Minimum Allowable Wage and no change in food allowance for foreign domestic helpers

The Government announced today (September 27) that the Minimum Allowable Wage (MAW) for foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) in Hong Kong will be increased by 2.5 per cent, from \$4,870 to \$4,990 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 remain at not less than \$1,236 per month.

The new level of MAW will apply to FDH contracts signed on or after tomorrow (September 28).

A Government spokesman said, "The Government reviews MAW for FDHs regularly. In accordance with the established mechanism, in this year's review, 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. Taking into account the aforementioned factors, the affordability of employers and the livelihood of FDHs, the Government has decided to adjust MAW. The Government has also reviewed the level of food allowance and, having taken into account the relevant consumer price indices, decided that the level should remain unchanged."

FDH contracts signed today or before at the existing MAW of \$4,870 per month will still be processed by the Immigration Department (ImmD), provided that the applications reach the ImmD on or before October 25 (Friday). This arrangement will give employers sufficient time to send the signed contracts to the ImmD for completion of the necessary application procedures.