

Latest arrangements for LCSD public services

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) announced today (February 16) that, in view of the latest situation of COVID-19, more leisure and cultural venues of the LCSD will reopen on February 19 (Friday).

In order to comply with the requirements stipulated in the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), LCSD staff at relevant venues will undergo polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 and ensure necessary measures are adopted at reopened venues. Users of sports premises, performance venues, museums and public libraries are required to scan the "LeaveHomeSafe" QR code or register their name, contact number and the date and time of the visit before being allowed to enter for necessary contact tracing if a confirmed case is found. Appeals are made to members of the public to download and install the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app in advance and scan the QR code with the app before entering. Members of the public who opt for registering their personal information at the scene are reminded to arrive earlier to avoid delaying their visits as longer time is required for such registration.

Leisure facilities to be reopened include indoor facilities (except children's play rooms) in sports centres, the Hong Kong Squash Centre/stand-alone squash centres, a table tennis centre, the Hong Kong Velodrome and Queen Elizabeth Stadium, as well as sports grounds (for athletic events), chess tables, amphitheatres (for individual leisure use only), skateparks, skateboard grounds, roller skating rinks, model car play areas, model boat pools, a rope course, road safety towns, water sports centres, soccer pitches, hockey grounds, cricket grounds, basketball courts, volleyball courts, handball courts, netball courts and a roller hockey court.

"Members of the public should take note of social distancing. The number of people in group gatherings should not be more than that as stipulated by the law. At the same time, members of the public should take note of the latest requirements on the maximum number of players in related sports facilities as stipulated in the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F). Each group of users must consist of no more than four persons. For team sports, the maximum number of players and referees to be allowed in each playing field/court at any time during competition or a training match should follow the rules and regulations of the respective sports competition. A user is not required to wear a mask when he or she is doing exercise within any outdoor sports premises or with a distance of at least 1.5 metres between groups within indoor sports premises (except for coaches/staff and training groups/classes/team sports consisting of more than four persons)," the spokesman for the LCSD said.

The LCSD will also adopt special measures at leisure facilities to be

reopened. The measures will include limiting the number of players permitted to stay in the courts/lanes and closing spectator stands. Furthermore, disinfectant carpets and alcohol-based handrub will be in place and cleaning measures will be stepped up at the venues.

The public can book the fee-charging facilities above to be reopened via the Internet Booking Service of Leisure Link, counter bookings and self-service kiosks at venues already reopened, or the Booking Office of the District Leisure Services Offices from February 18 (Thursday). Counter bookings and self-service kiosks at the above venues to be reopened will resume operation on the same day of reopening (February 19). In order to avoid a busy network, the public can book fee-charging facilities via the Internet Booking Service of Leisure Link within four days in advance from February 18, or within seven days in advance from February 19.

Some leisure facilities will continue to be closed until further notice. They are public beaches, public swimming pools, children's play facilities, barbecue sites, indoor children's play rooms and the Pui O Campsite. Some LCSD venues will continue to be temporarily closed for anti-epidemic purposes. Please refer to the attachment for details.

The LCSD will continue to cancel recreational and sports programmes to be held until further notice.

Meanwhile, booking applications for public swimming pools, amphitheatres, leisure venues for non-designated use and sales activities at non-fee-charging leisure venues, as well as applications for road safety towns and the standby arrangement for non-fee charging land recreation facilities, are suspended until further notice.

For cultural venues, all of the LCSD's performance venues will be opened for performances or activities with live audiences from February 19 with special seating arrangements. The number of audience members in major facilities of the venues such as concert halls, theatres, auditoria, cultural activities halls and arenas will be limited to half of the original capacity. Consecutive seats will be limited to four and seats will be evenly distributed. Performers who are unable to wear masks during rehearsal or performance must take a government-recognised RT-PCR nucleic acid test for COVID-19 and obtain a negative test result within 72 hours before their first entry to the performance venues. For activities to be held in minor facilities of the performance venues such as music/dance studios and lecture/conference/function rooms, the number of users will be limited to half of the original capacity in most cases. For the number of users, the number of participants in each cluster and other details, please refer to the notifications of individual venues. All hiring activities open to the public at outdoor facilities will remain suspended.

URBTIX will maintain Internet and mobile app ticketing and hotline services. URBTIX outlets and ticket dispensing machines at LCSD performance venues will resume operation together with the reopened venues from February 19 onwards. Ticket holders of cancelled events are advised to contact the respective event organisers or check their latest announcements on refund

arrangements. For events that organisers choose to arrange refunds for at URBTIX outlets, details will be announced on the URBTIX webpage in due course.

The Hong Kong Central Library, six other major public libraries and 31 district libraries will be partially reopened on February 19. Facilities include the adult, young adult and children's libraries. Special opening hours, from 1pm to 8pm from Mondays to Saturdays and 9am to 5pm on Sundays and public holidays, will be implemented. Admission quotas will apply. Other facilities will remain closed.

All book drop services of the Hong Kong Public Libraries and those located at MTR Central, Kowloon Tong and Nam Cheong Stations as well as the self-service library stations at Island East Sports Centre Sitting-out Area, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and Tsuen Nam Road, Tai Wai, will maintain services. Public libraries will continue to provide online services such as e-Books and e-Databases. Please visit www.hkpl.gov.hk/en/index.html for details.

The Hong Kong Museum of Art, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Museum of History will partially reopen their exhibition facilities on February 19. For details please visit the websites of the three museums. All museum public programmes, interactive exhibits and children's facilities will remain suspended. Special opening hours from 10am to 5pm daily (except on the regular closing day) will be implemented for the reopened museums, which will apply quotas to limit visitor flow. Other museums will remain closed, including the Hong Kong Film Archive, which will be closed for maintenance work.

All music centres of the Music Office will resume counter services on February 19.

Visitors to facilities of performance venues, public libraries and museums will need to use hand sanitiser and will be subject to temperature checks before admission. They also need to wear their own masks. Children under 12 will only be allowed to enter public libraries and museums when accompanied by an adult. Enhanced measures including cleaning and disinfection between sessions will be conducted.

The LCSD spokesman appealed to the public to use the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app when visiting LCSD venues in order to keep a more precise record of their whereabouts, thereby minimising the risk of further transmission of the virus.

The LCSD will pay close attention to the latest developments of the pandemic, as well as the requirements for scheduled premises as stipulated in the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), and review or revise the above reopening arrangements in due course.