

Latest arrangements for LCSD public services

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) announced today (April 14) that, in view of the first phase of relaxation of social distancing measures announced by the Government, some leisure and cultural venues will be reopened from April 21 (Thursday).

Leisure venues

Facilities to be reopened include indoor sports facilities such as sports centres (including children's play rooms), squash centres/stand-alone squash centres, table tennis centres, badminton centres, the Hong Kong Velodrome and the sports facilities of the Queen Elizabeth Stadium and outdoor sports facilities (including sports grounds, tennis courts, bowling greens, soccer pitches, hockey grounds, archery ranges, sports climbing facilities, golf driving ranges, basketball courts, volleyball courts, handball courts, netball courts, cricket grounds, baseball courts, rugby pitches, badminton courts, table tennis tables, roller hockey grounds, roller skating rinks, gateball courts, Shek O Obstacle Golf Course, cycling facilities, skateparks, skateboard grounds and the facilities of the Tuen Mun Recreation and Sports Centre). Other outdoor leisure facilities including model car play areas, model boat pools, boating parks, outdoor children's play facilities, fitness equipment, road safety towns, chess tables, pebble walking trails, amphitheatres (only for individual leisure use only) and wedding venues will be reopened on the same day.

Members of the public can book the above fee-charging facilities to be reopened via the Internet Booking Service of Leisure Link from April 16 (Saturday). The Booking Office of the District Leisure Services Offices (DLSOs) will resume operation from April 19 (Tuesday). Counter bookings and self-service kiosks at the above venues to be reopened will resume operation on the same day of reopening (April 21). Regarding the booking of leisure facilities, the LCSD will adjust the quota of individual booking from a maximum of four hours play per day to a maximum of two hours play per day during non-peak hours for the same type of facility at individual venues. The quota of individual bookings per day during peak hours remains the same (a maximum of two hours play per day for the same type of facility). Moreover, the standby arrangement for non-fee charging land recreation and sports facilities will also resume from May 20.

"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 mask wearing and 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," the spokesman for the LCSD said.

Some leisure facilities will continue to be closed until further notice. They are public beaches, public swimming pools, water sports centres, barbecue sites and the Pui O Campsite. Please refer to the annex for the list of sports centres to be reopened.

On the other hand, applications from schools or organisations for use of amphitheatres and leisure venues for non-designated use/sales activities, and application from schools or organisations for road safety towns will continue to be suspended until further notice.

For refund arrangements in relation to venue closures, the hirer may submit a completed refund application form together with the original booking permit to the DLSOs of the LCSD in person or by post, or to relevant leisure venues by post (the public can submit the application in person to relevant venues after the reopening), or make use of drop-in boxes located at the DLSOs. The refund application form can be downloaded from www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/aboutlcsd/forms/refund.html. Due to the closure of fee-charging facilities in relation to the situation of COVID-19, the number of refund cases will increase tremendously. The LCSD has adopted measures to handle these refund cases as soon as possible but a prolonged processing time for refunds is expected. Members of the public are advised to note the longer time required for refunds. The department apologises for any inconvenience caused.

Cultural venues

All public libraries will resume services from April 21 and apply admission quotas. Facilities to be reopened include the adult, young adult and children's libraries, the newspapers and periodicals areas, the Toy Library of Hong Kong Central Library and computer facilities. Students' study rooms will be reopened on April 19 early with extended opening hours until May 31. All book drop services of 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. The counting of overdue fines shall resume from May 5. Please visit the public libraries website for details (www.hkpl.gov.hk/en/index.html).

All museums (except the Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence and the Sheung Yiu Folk Museum) will be reopened on April 21. Admission quotas will be implemented to limit visitor flow. Public programmes will resume gradually.

All performance venues (except for Tai Po Civic Centre, Sheung Wan Civic Centre and Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre) will be reopened for performances or activities with live audiences from April 21 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. Performers who are unable to wear masks during rehearsal or performance must take a government-recognised reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction nucleic acid test for COVID-19 and obtain a negative test result within seven days before their first entry to the performance venues, and undergo a rapid antigen test for COVID-19 every day before entry into the premises. For activities to be held in minor facilities of the performance venues such as music/dance studios and lecture/function/conference 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. Eating and drinking are not permitted inside the hiring facilities. 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 April 21 onwards. Ticket holders of cancelled events are advised to contact the respective event organisers or check their latest announcements on refund arrangements. For events for which organisers choose to arrange refunds at URBTIX outlets, details will be announced on the URBTIX webpage in due course.

All music centres of the Music Office will resume counter services from April 21. All instrumental music training classes, musicianship classes, and some outreach music courses organised by the Music Office will resume face-to-face classes on the same day. In light of public health considerations, both Chinese and Western wind instrumental classes will continue to be conducted online until further notice.

In order to comply with the requirements stipulated in the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) and relevant requirements of administrative instructions, the LCSD will ensure necessary measures to be adopted at reopened venues. Users of sports premises, performance venues, museums and public libraries are required to scan the "LeaveHomeSafe" QR code before being allowed to enter for necessary contact tracing if a confirmed case is found. In accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Vaccine Pass) Regulation (Cap. 599L) and relevant requirements of administrative instructions, all persons entering or remaining at sports premises or other indoor venues under the management of the LCSD must comply with the requirement of the Vaccine Pass. To expedite the process of admission, appeals are made to members of the public to download and install the "LeaveHomeSafe", "iAM Smart" or "eHealth" mobile app in advance and/or store the QR code of a COVID-19 vaccination record or COVID-19 vaccination medical exemption certificate in the app, or carry a paper copy of their COVID-19 vaccination record and/or COVID-19 vaccination medical exemption certificate printed with an encrypted QR code for scanning by the staff members of certain premises. Members of the public who opt for showing their COVID-19 vaccination record or exemption certificate printed without an encrypted QR

code are reminded to arrive earlier to avoid delaying their visits as longer time is required for such registration. Details on the latest dosage schedule for the Vaccine Pass issued by the Government can be found at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/vp_t1_ENG.pdf.

Visitors to facilities of sports premises, public libraries, museums, performance venues and music centres will be subject to temperature checks and will need to use hand sanitiser before admission. They also need to wear their own masks. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection measures will be conducted at venues.

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.