

Latest arrangements on LCSD public services

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) announced today (December 1) that, in view of the latest situation of COVID-19, further measures have to be adopted to achieve social distancing. Some leisure and cultural venues/facilities will be temporarily closed starting from tomorrow (December 2) until further notice.

For leisure venues, all public swimming pools and water sports centres managed by the LCSD will be temporarily closed from tomorrow (December 2). Lifeguard services at those gazetted beaches which were originally open during the winter period, including Deep Water Bay Beach, Clear Water Bay Second Beach, Silverstrand Beach and Golden Beach, will be suspended on the same day. Showering facilities and changing rooms at all gazetted beaches will also be closed to reduce the chances of spreading the virus. The public should neither swim nor gather at beaches to avoid accidents.

Non fee-charging and fee-charging venues for team games including hard-surface soccer pitches, grass pitches, baseball courts, rugby pitches, cricket grounds, basketball courts, volleyball courts, netball courts, handball courts, hockey grounds and a roller hockey court will be temporarily closed from tomorrow (December 2) to avoid crowd gathering. These facilities will be cordoned off gradually. In addition, the LCSD will also temporarily close some leisure facilities such as spectator stands, billiard facilities and will step up cleaning measures. At the same time, dancing activities will be temporarily prohibited in indoor facilities and some leisure facilities such as barbecue sites, indoor children's play rooms and Pui O Campsite will continue to be closed until further notice.

Other indoor and outdoor sports premises under the LCSD will continue to be open for sub-group training/classes with not more than two persons in each sub-group. For sub-group training/classes in activity rooms, multi-purpose rooms, dance rooms, no more than two persons may be allowed in each sub-group including the coach (only one-on-one classes are allowed). Each sub-group should be at least 1.5 metres apart or with effective partitions in between. The spokesman for the LCSD reminded members of the public to take note of social distancing and to wear a mask before and after exercise at outdoor leisure venues and wear a mask at all times at indoor leisure venues.

Meanwhile, processing and acceptance of booking applications for dancing activities in indoor facilities, public swimming pools and water sports centres, as well as use of amphitheatres and leisure venues for non-designated use, sales activities at non fee-charging leisure venues, and school/group booking applications for road safety towns are suspended until further notice.

For refund arrangements in relation to these measures, the hirer may submit a completed refund application form together with the original booking

permit or by post to the LCSD booking office at a District Leisure Services Office or relevant leisure venues. The application form can be downloaded from www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/aboutlcsd/forms/refund.html.

To reduce the massive number of refund cases due to closure of venues on short notice during the epidemic which prolongs the processing time for refund, the advance facility booking period through Leisure Link booking counters, Internet service and self-service kiosks will be temporarily shortened from 10 days to seven days from tomorrow (December 2) until further notice.

For recreation and sports programmes, with effect from tomorrow (December 2), the LCSD will cancel all programmes held in public swimming pools, water sports centres, fitness rooms, activity rooms and dance rooms in indoor sports centres, all billiard and American pool programmes as well as most training courses and fun days of team sports. They include football, baseball, touch rugby, basketball, volleyball, handball and hockey. Furthermore, the LCSD will suspend the enrolment for all of the above programmes and arrange full or partial refund for affected participants of paid activities.

For cultural venues, from tomorrow onwards, major facilities of the LCSD performance venues such as concert halls, theatres, auditoria, cultural activities halls and arenas; minor facilities such as rehearsal rooms, music/dance studios and lecture/conference/function rooms; and all exhibition facilities will only open for livestream and recorded performances/activities without live audiences and rehearsals by professional groups. All performers should wear masks as far as practicable. If performers are not able to wear masks during rehearsals/activities, they must take a COVID-19 test within 72 hours prior to their first rehearsal/activity. They can only participate in the relevant activity after they have obtained a negative test result. Depending on the number of days of the rehearsals/activities, a performer has to provide an updated negative test result every 10 days. All hiring activities open to the public at outdoor facilities will be suspended.

The URBTIX outlets and ticket dispensing machines at LCSD performance venues will be closed on the same day. URBTIX will maintain Internet and mobile app ticketing and hotline services. Refund arrangements in relation to the closure of cultural facilities will be announced in due course.

The Hong Kong Central Library, the six major libraries and their reference libraries, and 31 district libraries will implement special opening hours. The opening hours will be 1pm to 8pm from Mondays to Saturdays and 9am to 5pm on Sundays and public holidays. To avoid the gathering of people, the libraries will arrange admission by two sessions with reduced seating capacity. Children under 12 will only be allowed to enter when accompanied by an adult. The libraries will provide limited services, including lending and returning of library materials and picking up reserved library materials. The students' study rooms of the above-mentioned libraries will implement the same special opening hours as the libraries, admission will also be arranged by two sessions with the number of users limited. Other facilities including the newspaper and periodical areas, children facilities, Computer Information

Centres and computer facilities will be closed. The remaining 32 small libraries and their students' study rooms, and all mobile libraries will be temporarily closed.

The self-service library stations at Island East Sports Centre Sitting-out Area, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and Tsuen Nam Road, Tai Wai, and all book drop services of the Hong Kong Public Libraries including those at MTR Central, Kowloon Tong and Nam Cheong stations will continue their 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.

All museums and music centres of the Music Office will be temporarily closed. All public programmes at museums, including the Cinema of the Hong Kong Film Archive, will be suspended.

Visitors to facilities of performance venues and public libraries will need to use hand sanitiser and will be subject to temperature checks before admission. They also need to wear their own masks. Enhanced measures including cleaning and disinfection between sessions will be conducted.

The LCSD will continue to monitor the situation closely and review the arrangements in a timely manner.