

Legislative amendments to abolish embarkation fee for cross-boundary ferry passengers gazetted

Legislative amendments which seek to effect the abolition of the embarkation fee for cross-boundary ferry passengers (embarkation fee), namely the Shipping and Port Control (Ferry Terminals) (Amendment) Regulation 2020, Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Ferry Terminals) (Amendment) Regulation 2020 and Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Fees) (Amendment) Regulation 2020, were gazetted today (April 29).

A spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau said that the embarkation fee is imposed on cross-boundary ferry owners in respect of each passenger embarking on a cross-boundary ferry vessel at the Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal, China Ferry Terminal or Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal. According to the current ferry fares, the embarkation fee is set at \$11 per passenger for a single trip. The abolition of embarkation fee was an initiative announced by the Chief Executive in her 2019 Policy Address Supplement.

The spokesman said, "All the cross-boundary ferry operators have undertaken to reduce their ferry fares to reflect the \$11 fee reduction in full and to hold such reduced fares for at least one year.

"The diversion effect of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge on cross-boundary patronage at the three above-mentioned cross-boundary ferry terminuses has been noticeable. The abolition of the embarkation fee should facilitate the development of cross-boundary ferry services while promoting, over the long term, a healthier competition between the land and sea cross-boundary transport modes. It should also help the cross-boundary ferry operators re-gain business when the three cross-boundary ferry terminuses are re-open for normal business."

The above legislative amendments will be tabled at the Legislative Council next Wednesday (May 6) under negative vetting procedures and the target commencement date is August 1.