

Minimum Allowable Wage and food allowance for foreign domestic helpers to increase

The Government announced today (September 28) that the Minimum Allowable Wage (MAW) for foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) in Hong Kong will be increased by 2.5 per cent, from \$4,410 to \$4,520 per month.

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 be increased by \$22 (or 2.1 per cent) from not less than \$1,053 to not less than \$1,075 per month.

The new levels of the MAW and the food allowance will apply to all FDH contracts signed on or after tomorrow (September 29).

A Government spokesman said, "The Government reviews the MAW for FDHs regularly. In accordance with the established practice, we have carefully considered Hong Kong's general economic and labour market conditions over the past year, as reflected through a basket of economic indicators, including the relevant income movement and price change in this year's review. The Government has also taken into account Hong Kong's near-term economic outlook, as well as affordability for employers on the one hand and the interests of FDHs on the other, in reaching the decision on the above-mentioned adjustment."

The spokesman added, "The Government has also reviewed the food allowance in lieu of free food, and decided to increase the allowance level."

FDH contracts signed today or earlier at the existing MAW of \$4,410 per month and with food allowance of not less than \$1,053 per month will still be processed by the Immigration Department (ImmD) provided that the applications reach ImmD on or before October 26 (Friday). This arrangement will give employers sufficient time to send the signed contracts to ImmD for completion of the necessary application procedures.