

New requirement for appointment to civil service on or after July 1

The Civil Service Bureau issued a circular to all departments today (October 12), promulgating a new requirement for appointment to the civil service on or after July 1, 2020. All civil servants joining the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (HKSAR Government) on or after this date will be required to take an oath or make a declaration that they will uphold the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Basic Law), bear allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and be responsible to the HKSAR Government.

"In order to enhance civil servants' awareness of the expectations and responsibilities brought on them by their official positions, we have introduced an arrangement to require new appointees to the civil service to take an oath or make a declaration that they will uphold the Basic Law, bear allegiance to the HKSAR and be responsible to the HKSAR Government. While most prospective appointees are required to sign a declaration when accepting the offer of appointment, those appointed directly to senior positions such as Heads of Departments will be required to take an oath," a spokesman for the Civil Service Bureau said.

"The requirement for civil servants to take an oath or make a declaration is an open acknowledgement of the acceptance and a genuine manifestation of the responsibilities of and expectations on civil servants, which will further safeguard and promote the core values that should be upheld by civil servants, and ensure the effective governance of the HKSAR Government. This arrangement also accords with the relevant provisions of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (National Security Law)," the spokesman said.

It has consistently been the duty of civil servants to uphold the Basic Law, bear allegiance to the HKSAR and be responsible to the HKSAR Government under the Basic Law and the Civil Service Code. Appointees to civil service posts should in no uncertain terms acknowledge and accept these duties.

Article 6 of the National Security Law, which was enacted and promulgated in Hong Kong on June 30, 2020, and came into effect at 11pm on June 30, 2020, stipulates that "(a) resident of the (HKSAR) who stands for election or assumes public office shall confirm in writing or take an oath to uphold the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and swear allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China in accordance with the law."

"Where an officer is suspected or is found to have breached the

declaration or oath while in service, the case will be dealt with according to civil service rules and regulations, including disciplinary action under the Public Service (Administration) Order or the relevant disciplined services legislation," the spokesman added.