

Public services to resume in a safe and orderly manner

Taking into account the need to fight the virus for the whole community, the Government has implemented special work arrangements for government employees in the past month. As only emergency and essential public services were provided, the provision of many public services has been reduced to various extents. In view of the latest development of the epidemic situation, a spokesman for the Government announced today (August 20) that government departments will gradually resume the provision of basic public services, which have been suspended or reduced in scale earlier, from August 24 to meet the needs of the public and enterprises.

"The current epidemic situation remains severe. While fighting the epidemic remains the top priority of the Government, taking into account the need for the functioning of society, bureaux/departments should provide more public services from August 24 onwards upon the implementation of targeted measures to reduce social contact and measures for infection control. The Government's ultimate goal is to resume full public services when conditions permit," the spokesman said.

For instance, the Housing Authority (HA)/the Housing Department will take an incremental approach to the resumption of basic public services starting from August 24. For example, the Public Rental Housing Application Office of the HA Customer Service Centre will open for three days a week. All the HA's Estate Management Offices will be open from 10am to 4pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Flat selection sessions of Sale of Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme Flats 2019 will gradually resume services from August 31.

The Labour Department will resume all counter services on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from August 24. The Kwun Tong Occupational Health Clinic will be open the whole day on Monday, Wednesday and Friday as well as Saturday morning. The Fanling Occupational Health Clinic will be open the whole day on Tuesday and Thursday, and Saturday morning.

In the week of August 24, all Home Affairs Enquiry Centres and Estate Beneficiaries Support Units of the Home Affairs Department will resume the provision of declaration/oath and counter services respectively for two days on a pre-booking basis.

The Receipt and Dispatch Counter services at the office of the Buildings Department (BD)'s New Buildings Divisions on Taikoo Wan Road, Hong Kong, will increase and will be open from 9.30am to 3pm from Monday to Friday for receiving statutory submissions and related documents and forms for new building works to replace the current drop-in counter services which operate three days a week. The Building Information Centre at 2/F of the BD Headquarters at North Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, Hoi Ting Road,

Kowloon, will be reopened between 10am to 4pm from Monday to Friday to provide inspection and copying services for private building records. The Receipt Counter at the ground floor of the BD Headquarters will be reopened between 10am to 4pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday for receipt of documents from members of the public.

The licensing and registration counter services of the Trade and Industry Department will be resumed on Tuesday and Thursday from 9.45am to 4.45pm starting from August 24.

"If bureaux/departments require more time to make necessary manpower deployments, procure supplies and put in place necessary arrangements, they may resume their services by phases. They will make announcements of their latest service arrangements separately," said the spokesman.

"In view of the need to reduce people flow and social contacts, bureaux/departments will continue to implement targeted measures while resuming more public services, such as by adopting a roster system to reduce the number of staff working in an office at any one time, or by introducing flexible working hours to reduce staff using public transport during peak hours. We appeal to the understanding of members of the public as the waiting time for public services may be lengthened, or a longer time may be needed for the processing of applications."

The spokesman appealed to members of the public to use alternative means, such as the post, drop-in boxes or online channels to receive the services they need as much as possible. Meanwhile, if members of the public have to visit government buildings or offices, they should wear surgical masks at all times and comply with the infection control measures implemented by relevant departments including temperature checks and crowd control arrangements.