

Regional Flag and Regional Emblem (Amendment) Ordinance gazetted and comes into effect today

The Regional Flag and Regional Emblem (Amendment) Ordinance (Amendment Ordinance) has been published in the Gazette and comes into effect today (November 24).

A Government spokesman said, "The fundamental principle and spirit of the Amendment Ordinance is 'respect' – respect the regional flag and regional emblem which are the symbols and signs of the Special Administrative Region. Emphasising on both 'education' and 'punishment', the Amendment Ordinance on one hand provides for the proper use, etiquette, education and promotion in relation to the regional flag and regional emblem; while on the other hand, it punishes and deters desecration of the regional flag and regional emblem by clarifying the relevant offences provisions. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will strengthen the publicity and educational efforts in relation to the regional flag and regional emblem, and enhance the public's understanding on the Amendment Ordinance."

In addition, in accordance with sections 3(1), 3(2A) and 3(2B) of the Amendment Ordinance, the Chief Executive has revised and published in the Gazette today the stipulations for the display and use of the national flag and national emblem and the regional flag and regional emblem. Key revisions include stipulating that the design of the regional emblem must be used on the websites of the HKSAR Government, the Legislative Council and the Judiciary; and specifying the recovery and disposal of the regional flag and regional emblem. The above-mentioned stipulations are available on the following website: www.protocol.gov.hk/files/stipulations_e.pdf.

On the mechanism for the recovery and disposal of the regional flag and regional emblem, any damaged, defiled, faded or substandard regional flags and regional emblems must be returned to designated collection points. The mechanism is similar to the one for the recovery and disposal of the national flag and national emblem. After an event in which regional flags or regional emblems are used, the organiser has the responsibility to keep the regional flags and regional emblems used on the site of the event for safekeeping or reuse, and return any damaged, defiled, faded or substandard regional flags and regional emblems to the designated collection points. Details of the locations and opening hours of the designated collection points are available at the Home Affairs Department's website: www.had.gov.hk/en/public_services/collection_of_damaged/index.htm.

The Regional Flag and Regional Emblem Ordinance (RFREO) came into effect in the HKSAR on July 1, 1997. In view of the amendments to the National Flag and National Emblem Ordinance that were passed in 2021, the HKSAR Government decided to amend the RFREO to suitably align the two ordinances.