

Meetings of Legislative Council Committees

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Committees will hold two open meetings during the week from July 23 to 27 in the LegCo Complex. Details of the meetings are available in the meeting schedule attached.

The information in the meeting schedule is subject to change. Please refer to the "LegCo Calendar" on the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk) for the latest details of meetings.

Members of the public are welcome to observe open meetings of LegCo Committees. Interested individuals and groups are advised to make advance booking of seats by calling the LegCo Secretariat at 3919 3399 during office hours. Members of the public can also listen to or watch all open meetings via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website.

Intermediate step on Public Light Buses

With a view to improving Public Light Bus (PLB) services and addressing public views about the high PLB compartment, which causes inconvenience to the elderly and people with mobility problems, the Government will require Green Minibuses (GMBs) and Red Minibuses (RMBs) which are newly registered on or after August 15, 2017 and September 15, 2017 respectively to be equipped with several passenger facilities, after following up and studying the matter with the PLB trade. At present, around 400 newly registered PLBs are equipped with additional seat handles and call bells with indicator lights, while 85 PLBs have been installed with newly designed intermediate step.

A spokesman for the Transport Department (TD) today (July 20) said that all the above-mentioned passenger facilities can help passengers in taking PLB services. Nevertheless, regarding the newly installed intermediate step, the TD has decided to cancel the requirement for PLBs to install intermediate step with effect from July 23, 2018, after conducting a detailed review on the results of the two different designs and inspecting the actual operation, as well as considering opinions from the trade. For those PLBs currently installed with this facility, the trade will arrange to remove it on their own.

The spokesman noted that the newly registered GMBs and RMBs were originally required to install the intermediate step by mid-August 2017 and mid-September 2017 respectively. However, the TD has received reports of passengers tripping over while alighting the PLBs. The TD is very concerned about these cases, and has therefore suspended the requirement for installing the intermediate step on PLBs. The TD then worked closely with the PLB manufacturers for a revised design and exchanged views with the trade and conducted on-site trials with them. Moreover, the TD invited an elderly group to conduct a trial on the new design of intermediate step.

However, since the roll-out of the new design in mid-May this year, up till now there have been cases of passengers tripping over while boarding PLBs. The TD has re-examined the issue and conducted on-board surveys. As the total number of PLBs installed with the facility is currently still small, quite a number of passengers are not fully aware of the intermediate step. Moreover, PLBs in Hong Kong operate on busy roads with a high passenger volume and frequent picking up and dropping off of passengers. With such a fast-paced lifestyle, passengers may trip over the intermediate step when boarding or alighting the PLBs. In view of this and after careful consideration of the review results of the two different intermediate step, the TD has decided to cancel the requirement for PLBs to install intermediate step for the sake of prudence.

In taking forward the concept of "Transport for All", the TD will continue to work with the PLB trade to improve PLB services by introducing more low-floor PLB models and so forth. In fact, with the aim of assisting wheelchair users in using PLB services, the Government introduced a low-floor wheelchair-accessible PLB trial scheme early this year. The TD will review the operational effectiveness of the trial scheme, including aspects such as technical and operational feasibility, repair and maintenance and passengers' feedback. The TD will discuss with the trade on further promoting low-floor PLBs if the trial scheme proves to be effective.

[Term of non-permanent CFA judge extended](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Chief Executive has accepted the recommendation of the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal to extend the term of office of the Right Honourable the Lord Millett, GBS as a non-permanent judge from another common law jurisdiction of the Court of Final Appeal for a period of three years commencing July 28, 2018.

The Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal Ordinance provides for a list of

non-permanent Hong Kong judges and a list of judges from other common law jurisdictions. The term of appointment of such judges is three years. That term may be extended for one or more periods of three years by the Chief Executive acting in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Justice.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (July 20) released the latest grading of water quality for 38 gazetted beaches and one non-gazetted beach (Discovery Bay) that are open for swimming.

Seventeen beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 19 as Fair (Grade 2) and three as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

C
h
e
u
n
g
U
n
i
v
e
r
s
i
t
y
B
e
a
c
h

U
P
P
L
E
A
S
E
C
H
L
O
W
E
R
C
H
E
U
N
G
S
H
A
B
E
A
C
H

Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach

Approach Beach

Big Wave Bay Beach

Butterfly Beach

Cafeteria New Beach

Cafeteria Old Beach

Casam Beach

Clear Water Bay First Beach

Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Golden Beach

Hoi Mei Wan Beach

Kadoorie Beach

Lido Beach

Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach

Middle Bay Beach

Shek O Beach

Silverstrand Beach

Stanley Main Beach

Discovery Bay

Grade 3 beaches are:

Castle Peak Beach

Ting Kau Beach

Silver Mine Bay Beach

Compared with the grading released last week, Anglers' Beach, Casam Beach, Hoi Mei Wan Beach and Lido Beach have been upgraded from Grade 3 to Grade 2. Discovery Bay and Middle Bay Beach have been changed from Grade 1 to Grade 2.

"The changes are generally within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of the beaches," an EPD spokesman said.

Silver Mine Bay Beach was reopened on July 18, following the completion of an improvement works project. The beach was temporarily closed from November 21, 2016, to carry out the "Improvement Works at Silvermine Bay Beach, Mui Wo, Lantau Island" project under the Signature Project Scheme (Islands District).

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, the EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's websites on Beach Water Quality (www.beachwq.gov.hk and www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Shek O Beach reopened

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (July 20) that the shark prevention net at Shek O Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island, has been repaired and the beach has been reopened.

The beach was temporarily closed earlier on for shark prevention net maintenance work.

However, due to big waves, the red flag is still hoisted at the beach. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.