

Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation (Amendment) Bill 2018 gazetted

The Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation (Amendment) Bill 2018 was gazetted today (July 6).

A Home Affairs Bureau spokesperson said, "The Bill seeks to improve the existing licensing regime, facilitate enforcement actions and enhance deterrence against unlicensed hotels and guesthouses."

To improve the existing licensing regime, the Bill empowers the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Authority to take into account in the licensing process the relevant restrictive provisions in land documents, local residents' views, and whether the licence applicant is a "fit and proper" person. The Bill also provides for a differentiation between a hotel licence and a guesthouse licence, and empowers the Authority to impose a licence condition on a guesthouse licence to prohibit the use of the word "hotel" in its business name.

To facilitate enforcement actions, the Bill introduces a strict liability offence. If there is evidence which proves that the premises are used as an unlicensed hotel or guesthouse, the owners and tenants of the premises will be held criminally liable, unless they can provide a relevant statutory defence. Moreover, in order to combat unlicensed hotels and guesthouses, the Bill empowers the Authority to apply for a search warrant to allow enforcement officers to break into, with reasonable force when necessary, a suspected unlicensed hotel or guesthouse to inspect or collect evidence.

As regards enhancing deterrence, the Bill empowers the Authority to apply to the court, upon the second conviction within 16 months of operating an unlicensed hotel or guesthouse or the new strict liability offence in respect of the same premises, to issue a closure order for the premises for six months. The maximum penalty will also be increased from a fine of \$200,000 to \$500,000, and imprisonment from two years to three years.

The spokesperson added, "Since the public consultation conducted in 2014, the Government has been engaging relevant stakeholders, and they were generally supportive of improving the existing licensing regime to strengthen the regulation of hotels and guesthouses, and to combat unlicensed hotels and guesthouses."

Upon the commencement of the Bill, existing licensees will have a 12-month transitional period. Specifically, if an existing licence expires within the 12-month transitional period, the licensee can apply for renewal based on the existing requirements for a period not exceeding 12 months. Upon expiry of this first-renewed licence, the licensee will have to meet all new requirements for further renewal of the licence.

The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council for first and second readings on July 11.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (July 6) released the latest grading of water quality of 37 gazetted beaches and one non-gazetted beach (Discovery Bay) that are open for swimming.

Sixteen beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 16 as Fair (Grade 2) and six as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach	Pui O Beach
Chung Hom Kok Beach	Repulse Bay Beach
Discovery Bay	South Bay Beach
Hap Mun Bay Beach	St Stephen's Beach
Hung Shing Yeh Beach	Tong Fuk Beach
Kiu Tsui Beach	Trio Beach
Lo So Shing Beach	Turtle Cove Beach
Lower Cheung Sha Beach	Upper Cheung Sha Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Approach Beach	Deep Water Bay Beach
Big Wave Bay Beach	Golden Beach
Butterfly Beach	Kadoorie Beach
Cafeteria New Beach	Kwun Yam Beach
Cafeteria Old Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Casam Beach	Shek O Beach
Castle Peak Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Stanley Main Beach

Grade 3 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach

Lido Beach

Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach

Hoi Mei Wan Beach

Ting Kau Beach

Compared with the grading released last week, Discovery Bay has been upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 1, and Casam Beach from Grade 3 to Grade 2. Big Wave Bay Beach, Deep Water Bay Beach, Kwun Yam Beach and Stanley Main Beach have been changed from Grade 1 to Grade 2; and Clear Water Bay Second Beach, Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach and Ting Kau Beach from Grade 2 to Grade 3.

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

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. 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 or www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Appointment of Financial Services Development Council Chairman

The Government announced today (July 6) the appointment of the Chairman of the Financial Services Development Council (FSDC).

The Chief Executive has appointed Mr Laurence Li Lu-jen as Chairman of the FSDC from July 11, 2018 to January 16, 2019, and for a term of two years as Chairman of the Board of Directors upon the incorporation of FSDC as a company limited by guarantee.

Mr Li will succeed the incumbent FSDC Chairman, Mrs Laura M Cha, who will retire from the FSDC with effect from July 11, 2018.

Announcing the appointment, the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, said, "Mr Li possesses strong expertise in the financial services industry. He has profound understanding of the objectives and operation of the FSDC, and has made remarkable contributions to the work of the FSDC since its establishment. I am confident that Mr Li will lead the FSDC to continue to carry out its mission in promoting the further development of Hong Kong's financial services industry."

Mr Lau also expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the outgoing Chairman Mrs Cha for her years of dedicated service and outstanding leadership in steering the FSDC to work towards the goal of enhancing the competitiveness of Hong Kong as an international financial centre.

The FSDC was established in 2013 by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government as a high-level, cross-sectoral advisory body to engage the industry in formulating proposals to promote the further development of Hong Kong's financial services industry and to map out the strategic direction for development. The FSDC has set up five committees, namely the Policy Research Committee; the Mainland Opportunities Committee; the New Business Committee; the Market Development Committee and the Human Capital Committee.

Results of targeted surveillance on *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* in ready-to-eat food all satisfactory

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 6) announced the results of a recently completed targeted food surveillance project on *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* in ready-to-eat food, which showed that all samples passed the test.

A total of 300 samples of ready-to-eat food, including cooked seafood such as fish, crustaceans and shellfish and raw foods such as raw oysters, sashimi and sushi, were collected from different retailers, including online retailers and food factories, for testing for *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* this year.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "*Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, a common bacterium that can cause food poisoning, is naturally present in seawater and often found in seafood. Food poisoning caused by this pathogenic bacterium is usually associated with consumption of undercooked or raw seafood, in particular shellfish, or improperly handled food that is contaminated with bacteria."

Common symptoms of food poisoning caused by *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, including diarrhoea, vomiting, mild fever and abdominal pain, usually occur

within one or two days after consumption of contaminated food. Recovery is usually within a few days. Nonetheless, children, the elderly, pregnant women and those with a weaker immune system are more likely to develop severe symptoms.

The spokesman said, "Despite the fact that the test results of the samples were all satisfactory, the trade and the public should not take the risk lightly. To prevent food poisoning caused by *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, the food trade should be reminded that raw oysters, sashimi and sushi sold on the premises should be separated from other food and kept in a refrigerator at a temperature between 0 and 4 degrees Celsius. To avoid cross contamination, raw food should be prepared only at specified areas in a food preparation room. Exclusive cutting boards and knives should be used and the utensils should be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly before handling different types of raw food. Cooking aquatic products thoroughly is the only way to prevent diseases caused by harmful microorganisms and parasites. Overproduction should also be avoided as the quality of food may be affected when the production capacity is overlooked."

The spokesman reminded consumers to patronise hygienic and reliable licensed food premises and consume ready-to-eat food as soon as possible after purchase. The elderly, children, pregnant women and those with a weaker immune system should avoid consuming high-risk food, including inadequately cooked food.

[TransferWise brings innovative international money transfer platform to Hong Kong \(with photo\)](#)

Leading London-based fintech company TransferWise announced today (July 6) the official launch of its international money transfer platform in Hong Kong, giving it a major foothold in Asia as part of the company's ongoing international expansion.

TransferWise co-founder and CEO Mr Kristo Käärman said the launch came as a timely move amid Hong Kong's commitment to boost fintech development. "We're excited to launch our service in Hong Kong and introduce a product that is cheaper, faster, and fairer for people and businesses here. The Hong Kong dollar has long been a highly requested currency at TransferWise, so we're happy to be able to open this to everyone," he said.

TransferWise operates on the concept of matching up transfers with other people on the digital platform. It uses the mid-market rate, which is only a fraction of the rates used by traditional currency transfer operators. After

a successful pilot period, TransferWise has already been able to drop prices for customers transferring money from Hong Kong by more than 20 per cent, Mr Käärman said.

"Over 3 million people across the world use TransferWise as a fair and easy way to manage their money across borders. Hong Kong represents a key market for TransferWise. Over 4 per cent of Hong Kong's population are foreigners, and many Hongkongers are living in other parts of the world. Hong Kong also has a long, rich history as a world leading economy and home of international commerce," he added.

Associate Director-General of Investment Promotion Dr Jimmy Chiang said, "I'm excited to see TransferWise making its foothold in Hong Kong. This is a big step not only for the company but also for Hong Kong as we are committed to becoming a leading fintech city in the world. TransferWise's decision to set up in our city is a win-win for both."

About TransferWise

Co-founded by Taavet Hinrikus and Kristo Käärman, TransferWise was launched in 2011 in the UK, and has attracted strategic investors including Andreessen Horowitz, Virgin's Sir Richard Branson and IVP. TransferWise uses the real exchange rate – the mid-market rate – making it up to eight times cheaper on average to send money abroad than through a bank. For more information, please visit www.transferwise.com.

About Invest Hong Kong

Invest Hong Kong is the department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government to attract foreign direct investment and support overseas and Mainland businesses to set up or expand in Hong Kong. It provides free advice and customised services for overseas and Mainland companies enrolled as its clients. For more information, please visit www.investhk.gov.hk.

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