

[Property owner fined over \\$39,000 for failing to comply with fire safety direction](#)

An owner was convicted and fined \$39,600 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts on November 16 for failing to comply with a fire safety direction issued under the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (FS(B)O) (Cap. 572).

The Buildings Department (BD) issued a fire safety direction under section 5(2)(a)(ii) of the FS(B)O to the owner of a unit in a 51-year-old composite building at Tang Lung Street, Causeway Bay, requiring the owner to comply with the fire safety construction requirement by providing a fire-rated door at the unit entrance.

Failing to comply with the statutory direction, the owner was prosecuted by the BD and was convicted and fined by the court.

"According to the FS(B)O, failing to comply with a statutory direction issued under the ordinance without reasonable excuse is a serious offence. The BD may instigate prosecution proceedings against the owner", a spokesman for the BD said today (November 30).

Pursuant to section 5(8) of the FS(B)O, any person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with a statutory direction, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000 at present) and to a further fine of \$2,500 for each day of non-compliance. Upon conviction, an application may also be made to the court for a Fire Safety Compliance Order against the owner under section 6(1) of the FS(B)O directing the owner to comply with the requirements of the direction.

[Information Gateway for Carers launches today](#)

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) announced that the Information Gateway for Carers (www.carers.hk) was launched today (November 30). Apart from providing carers with quick and convenient information on welfare services, community resources and caring techniques, the Information Gateway will also, through pop-up messages, encourage carers to seek help when necessary.

The Information Gateway is a joint venture of the SWD and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. The Hong Kong Shue Yan University (HKSYU) was

commissioned to develop the website, which is equipped with a user-friendly interface with easy search functions to enable carers' access to comprehensive and updated information so that they can get the support they need.

To ensure that the design of the Information Gateway meets the needs of carers, the SWD and HKSJU have collected opinions from carers before the construction of the website. The content of the Information Gateway includes services for elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons in mental recovery, children with special educational needs and their carers, caring skills, community activities and resources for carers.

The Information Gateway is linked to the Designated Hotline for Carer Support (182 183) and the Vacancy Enquiry System for Respite Services/Emergency Placement to enable carers' access to support at all times.

For enquiries about the Information Gateway, please call the SWD's hotline at 2343 2255.

Public to vote for best Transport Department frontline staff

The Transport Department (TD) will hold the Best Customer Service Awards 2023/24 election between December 4 and 8. Members of the public are invited to vote for the best frontline staff for the awards.

"By holding this election, the TD would like to encourage our frontline staff to embrace the belief of 'Putting Our Hearts Into It' when providing public services and to continue upholding and improving our service standard," a spokesman for the TD said today (November 30).

All frontline staff of the TD's Driving Services Section, the Licensing Section and the Public Vehicles and Prosecutions Section (including the Driving Test Centres, the Driving Test Appointment Office, the Licensing Unit, the Vehicle Inspection and Records Unit, the Cross Boundary Unit, the Public Vehicles Unit and the Driving-offence Points Office) are eligible for voting by the public. Members of the public who plan to attend the aforesaid offices for public services from December 4 to 8 are invited to cast their vote for the best frontline staff for the awards. A total of 43 awards will be selected.

Online voting is also available for this election which will be opened from 9am on December 4 to 8pm on December 8. Members of the public can cast their vote by scanning the QR codes printed on the posters and forms available at the aforesaid offices, or through the following links:

Best Licensing Service Awards: eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/td0030/

Best Driving Service Awards: eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/td0029/

HKSAR Government strongly condemns US Congress for interfering in Hong Kong matters

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (November 30) strongly condemned the United States (US) House Foreign Affairs Committee for passing the so-called Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office Certification Act, its complete disregard of the status of the HKSAR under "one country, two systems", its malicious slander against the just and legitimate objective of the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) and the fact that human rights and the rule of law are properly protected in accordance with the law by the HKSAR Government, and its gross interference in the affairs of Hong Kong. That Act is factually wrong. It aims to achieve political objectives by smearing and attacking the work of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs) in the US on promoting mutually beneficial economic and trade relations and cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and the US, and by misleadingly luring the removal of the privileges, exemptions and immunities enjoyed by and even the closure of the ETOs. The HKSAR Government strongly condemned such attempts to damage the trade relations owing to individual political interests, and sternly urged the US not to violate again the basic norms governing international relations and to stop political smears and attacks on the HKSAR and interfering in Hong Kong matters.

The HKSAR Government has been establishing and maintaining economic and trade relations with places around the world in accordance with the "one country, two systems" principle and has, pursuant to Article 156 of the Basic Law and legislation of the host countries, set up 14 overseas ETOs as the official representatives of the HKSAR, including the three ETOs established in the US.

In their respective jurisdictions, the ETOs in Washington DC, New York and San Francisco maintain close liaison with interlocutors in government, business, think tanks and various sectors to enrich ties between Hong Kong and the US in different areas such as trade, investment, arts and culture. The smooth operation of the three ETOs in the US contributes to strengthening co-operation between Hong Kong and the US in different areas, and is mutually beneficial to both places.

In fact, the US enjoys significant economic benefit in Hong Kong. The US enjoyed a trade surplus of US\$284.9 billion with Hong Kong in the past 10

years, the largest among its global trading partners, and more than 1 200 US companies have set up businesses in Hong Kong. If the US insists on undermining the mutually beneficial relations between Hong Kong and the US through the so-called Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office Certification Act, it will ultimately harm the interests of the US and its companies.

The three ETOs of the HKSAR in the US will continue to promote Hong Kong's unique advantages, tell the good stories of Hong Kong and, where necessary, refute erroneous reports and clarify misconceptions without fear or favour, so as to foster economic and trade relations and co-operation on different fronts between Hong Kong and the US on a mutually beneficial basis.

The HKSAR is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China. The enactment of the NSL aims to, among others, improve the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding national security of the HKSAR, as well as maintain prosperity and stability of the HKSAR. The HKSAR Government will continue to resolutely, fully and faithfully implement the NSL to prevent, suppress and punish in accordance with the law acts and activities that endanger national security.

The HKSAR Government firmly safeguards the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents protected by law. Since Hong Kong's return to the motherland, human rights of Hong Kong residents have been firmly protected by the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law. Hong Kong residents enjoy the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Basic Law, the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance and other relevant laws. The NSL clearly stipulates that human rights shall be respected and protected in safeguarding national security in the HKSAR, and that the rights and freedoms, which Hong Kong residents enjoy under the Basic Law and the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to Hong Kong, including freedom of speech, press, publication, association, and assembly, shall be protected in accordance with the law.

The legal system in the HKSAR is robust and transparent. The Basic Law guarantees that the common law system continues to be practised in Hong Kong, the independence of the Judiciary, and that the exercise of judicial power shall be free from interference. In addition, the power of final adjudication is vested in the HKSAR Court of Final Appeal (CFA). Eminent jurists from other common law jurisdictions (from the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada) are appointed as overseas non-permanent judges of the CFA. This helps maintain a high degree of confidence in the legal system of the HKSAR, and allows Hong Kong to maintain strong links with other common law jurisdictions.

2023 District Council Election Forum

To enable voters to have thorough understanding of the background, election platform, competency of the district council candidates as well as their views and recommendations for district matters so that voters can vote for the best and the most suitable district council member to represent their requests, the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) has been producing 2023 District Council Election Forum (the Forum) for broadcast starting from December 1.

The Forum will be broadcast on RTHK TV Channel 31 for seven consecutive days starting from December 1 to December 7. The radio version will be broadcast concurrently on RTHK Radio 2 (FM94.8). The broadcasting time at TV channel will be at 9.30pm, Friday to Monday; and at 6.30pm and 9.30pm Tuesday to Thursday. The radio version will be broadcast from 9pm to 12 midnight, Monday to Friday; and from 8pm to 12 midnight on Saturday and Sunday.

The Forum consists of two sessions, that is, the session on District Council geographical constituencies (DCGCs) and the session on District Committees constituencies (DCCs). For the session introducing 171 candidates from the 44 DCGCs will be broadcast from December 1 to December 4 at night; while the DCCs' session, 228 candidates from 18 districts will be broadcast from December 5 to December 7 at night. During the Forum, each candidate will introduce his/her election platform and respond to one random question on relevant local issue. Public members may get detailed information and review the Forum by browsing the dedicated District Council Election website (app7.rthk.hk/special/dcelection2023) (Chinese version only) .

Additionally, RTHK has also produced eight episodes of TV programme, "Get a comprehensive view of the DC election" and 10 episodes of radio programme "Know more about the DC election" to explain to the members of public about the background and relevant information of the 2023 District Council Ordinary Election, in a simple and concise manner. All details about these programmes and other District Council election-related matters can also be found on the RTHK's dedicated District Council Election website.

"This District Council election is the first large-scale territory-wide election being held after improving the district governance system and reforming the District Councils (DCs), and is of utmost significance to the good governance and the long-term stability of the HKSAR, the well-being of every citizen, and the harmony and stability of the community. By organising a number of election forums, the Government aims at providing each candidate with equal opportunities and channel to present to members of the public their election platform and views on relevant local issue. At the same time, it may enable general public to understand that improvements to the district governance system and reforms to the DCs are highly relevant to the public's livelihood and important to improving governance at the district level, and also encourages them to actively participate in this District Council election for building a better community," a Government's spokesman said.