

Fire warriors protect country parks

During fire season, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department fire crews take the goal of detecting and combatting hill fires within country parks so seriously that they remain on duty around the clock.

News.gov.hk spoke with the department to learn more about the work of its fire crews and an artificial intelligence-powered hill fire detector. The department also reminds citizens to exercise caution during the Chung Yeung Festival in an effort to prevent hill fires.

The story is available at www.news.gov.hk/eng/feature today (October 22) in text and video format.

12th round of computer ballot registration for submitting applications for Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles to open October 23 to 26

The Transport Department today (October 22) reminded members of the public that the 12th round of computer ballot registration for submitting applications for Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles (the scheme) will be open from 10am tomorrow (October 23) to 11.59pm on October 26, and the ballot result will be announced on October 27.

Eligible applicants for the scheme can register for computer balloting through the designated website (www.hzmbqfs.gov.hk). Successful balloting applicants are required to submit applications for the scheme within the designated date and time randomly allocated by the computer system.

Specified forms of relevant notices

and certificate under Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) Ordinance gazetted

The specified forms of the relevant notices and certificate under the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) Ordinance (Cap. 570) (the Ordinance) was published in the Gazette today (October 22).

The Fines and Fixed Penalties (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2023 (the Amendments Ordinance) comes into effect today, raising the level of the fixed penalty for the seven scheduled offences (Note) which involve the conduct of individual members of the public including disposal of waste and spitting in public places, country parks or into the sea from \$1,500 to \$3,000; and the fixed penalty level for the two scheduled offences mainly related to shopfront extension and illegal disposal of construction waste or large amounts of other waste, from \$1,500 to \$6,000.

Aside from raising the levels of fixed penalties of relevant offences, the Amendments Ordinance also empowers the Secretary for Environment and Ecology to specify the forms of relevant notices and certificate to be published in the Gazette according to section 17A of the Ordinance. This will enable necessary formatting revisions to be made in a more flexible and timely manner in the future. The relevant notices and certificate include:

(i) the notice that may be given under section 3 of the Ordinance to a person who is believed to have committed a scheduled offence under the Ordinance for payment of the fixed penalty specified for that offence;

(ii) the notice that the Authority is required to serve under section 6 of the Ordinance to a person who has not paid the fixed penalty within 21 days, with a view to demanding payment of the relevant fine and informing the person, if he/she wishes to dispute liability for the offence, to notify the Authority in writing; and

(iii) the certificate for making an application in the name of the Secretary for Justice to the magistrate for the recovery of fixed penalty under section 9(2) of the Ordinance.

A spokesman for the Environment and Ecology Bureau said, "The Government is determined to enhance environmental hygiene in Hong Kong. The new fixed penalty levels for offences such as littering and shopfront extension comes into effect today. In addition, the Government will conduct a public consultation on the second stage of legislative amendments this year to enhance the efficiency and deterrent effect of enforcement.

"In the past three months, the Government has enhanced publicity and education to raise the awareness of the members of the public and relevant

sectors on the new fixed penalty levels and to enhance their law-abiding awareness."

Note: The seven scheduled offences are (i) display of bills or posters without permission; (ii) depositing of litter or waste in public spaces; (iii) spitting in public places; (iv) fouling of street by dog faeces; (v) depositing of litter in country parks and special areas; (vi) spitting in country parks and special areas; and (vii) marine littering.

Mui Wo Swimming Pool temporarily closed

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (October 22) that due to an insufficient number of lifeguards on duty, Mui Wo Swimming Pool in Islands District has been temporarily closed until further notice to ensure the safety of swimmers.

Yellow fire danger warning

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Yellow fire danger warning

The fire danger situation today (October 22) is yellow and the risk of fire is high. People are urged to prevent fires breaking out and hikers should also be vigilant.