

20th Business Liaison Group Meeting with the Trade of Recreational Clubs

Date : 25 October 2022 (Tuesday)
Time : 3:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.
Venue : Business Facilitation Team Conference Room, 9/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wanchai and Zoom Meeting
Convenor : Miss Winnie Leong
Assistant Commissioner for Efficiency (Business Facilitation)

Trade Attendees:

The Helena May
Ms Betty Simpson

General Manager (also contact point of Club Managers' Association)

Club Lusitano
Ms Beatrice Leung

Executive Assistant Manager

Hong Kong Cricket Club
Ms Clara Li
Mr Simon Lai

Assistant General Manager
House Operations Manger

Ladies Recreation Club
Mr Johnson Cheng
Ms Crystal Wong
Ms Sandy Fung

Facilities & Maintenance Manager
Human Resources Manager
Executive Assistant

The American Club Hong Kong
Mr Carl Chan
Mr Ryan Chow

Director of Facilities
Technical Manager

The Foreign Correspondents' Club, Hong Kong
Mr Didier Saugy

General Manager

The Hong Kong Club
Mr Jackey Cheung
Mr Brian Wong
Mr Eric Chan
Mr Simon Chan

Director of Finance
Director of Human Resources
Chief Accountant
Club Sommelier

The Hong Kong Country Club

Mr Signory Sham
Ms Heather Lam
Mr Vernon Cheung

Director of Human Resources
Executive Assistant Manager
Financial Controller

Victoria Recreation Club

Miss Sharren Lo

Administration Manager

Government Representatives:

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)

Mr Wong Wai Nang
Ms Ho Wing Kam

Superintendent (Licensing)²
Chief Health Inspector (Liquor
Licensing) Headquarters

Home Affairs Department (HAD)

Mr Lau Wing Cheuk, Moses

Chief Executive Officer (Licensing
Authority)

Mr Wan Chi Wai, Terry

Senior Building Surveyor (Licensing
Authority)²

Mr So Lap Chi

Assistant Divisional Officer (Licensing
Authority) Fire Safety 1

Labour Department (LD)

Ms Kwok Sze Ngar, Pearl
Ms Chu Wei Kwok, Agnes

Senior Labour Officer
Labour Officer

Efficiency Office, Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau

Ms Lai Suet Ying, Lisa (Secretary)

Chief Management Services Officer
(Business Facilitation)³

Miss Yeung Hiu Bing, Jenny

Business Facilitation Officer⁽²⁾

Ms Tung Wing Lam, Sophy

Business Facilitation Officer⁽³⁾

Observers from members of Task Force on Business Liaison Groups (BLGTF):

Mr Kenneth Kwan

Mr William Siu

Mr Stanley Sy

Ms June Wong

Ms Belinda Yeung, JP

Introduction

1. The **Convenor** welcomed trade attendees and government representatives to the meeting, and also members of the Task Force on Business Liaison Groups who joined the meeting as observers.

Agenda item 1 – Briefings by government departments

1.1 Measures to facilitate licence applications related to club premises

a) Enhancement of Online Licence Services for Liquor Licences/Club Liquor Licences

2. FEHD representative gave a briefing on the subject with the presentation slides at [Annex 1](#). Liquor Licensing Board has accepted electronic applications for liquor licences/ club liquor licences through the “Online Licence Services” system since August 2010. To further facilitate business and provide applicants with greater convenience and efficiency in the application process, the system was further enhanced by October 2021 with the integration of the “iAM Smart” mobile application and other new functions such as e-Me form filling, pre-filling of licence information for renewal or amendment applications, and checking of application status.

3. The **Convenor** enquired whether it would be possible for a business operator, who is the holder of a club liquor licence, to authorise his/ her employee to use the employee’s own “iAM Smart” account to process club liquor licence related applications; and how would FEHD tackle the situation if a club liquor licensee, who is an employee of a business operator, applies for amendment or even cancellation of the club liquor licence through “iAM Smart” without first obtaining the consent of the business operator, in which the operation of the business concerned could be hampered as a consequence. FEHD advised that the applicant or holder of liquor licence/ club liquor licence should use his/ her own “iAM Smart” account to log in to the system to submit application for online services. On the other hand, at present, if the Liquor Licensing Board received an application for revocation of liquor licence/ club liquor licence, the Liquor Licensing Office would send an acknowledgement letter to the licensee’s correspondence address and a copy of such letter would also be sent to the licensed liquor premises. Business operators might take note of such arrangement. Notwithstanding, it is believed that business operators would select their own suitable and trustworthy candidates to be the holder of the liquor licence/ club liquor licence.

b) Provision of online services for Clubhouse Certificate of Compliance

4. HAD representative gave a briefing on the subject with the presentation slides at [Annex 2](#). The Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) of HAD has been providing e-licensing services for Clubhouse Certificate of Compliance (CoC) related applications since mid-2022 to enable the trade operators to apply for their certificates, make payment, collect certificates and track application status online without the need to visit the licensing offices.

(Post meeting notes: The hyperlink of the webpage of online submission forms for Clubhouse CoC related applications was sent to the trade attendees on 27 October 2022 as supplementary information to the meeting.)

5. The **Convenor** invited HAD to share tips for trade operators to avoid common pitfalls when they handle licence applications through electronic means. HAD reminded that the file size of supporting documents (e.g. layout plans) should not be too large as there was limitation in the file size for uploading documents. For documents exceeding file size limit, the applicants could submit such documents through postal or courier services separately. Moreover, HAD would examine the possibility of enhancing the capacity of the online platform to facilitate uploading of files with larger sizes.

6. In response to a trade operator's enquiry, HAD advised that while e-tracking facility applied to new and renewal applications, the other e-services (e.g. e-submission, e-payment and e-licence) were available for new, renewal, transfer, and alterations and additions (A&A) works applications for Clubhouse CoC.

7. A trade operator enquired whether consultants could handle the Clubhouse CoC related applications through the existing online means, as it was common for club operators to engage consultants to handle application-related matters on their behalf. HAD advised that it should be possible for the consultants to handle the application-related matters on behalf of the club operators through electronic means, and they would provide more details after the meeting.

(Post-meeting notes: HAD supplemented that a consultant could help the club operator to fill in the relevant online application form through the GovHK Form System. After completing the online form, the consultant could save the data (in gfd format) to his/her own computer and provide a password to protect the saved data. The consultant could then pass the data file and password to the club operator. The club operator could

retrieve the data by uploading the data file onto the online application form through the GovHK Form System for review and make use of iAM Smart+ for digital signing the online form for submission. Furthermore, HAD advised that, for e-tracking of application status, the club operator could pass the login information and password provided by HAD to the consultant for logging in the Licence Application Tracking Facility for checking the status of new or renewal applications of the Clubhouse CoC.)

8. A trade operator enquired whether the Club can receive e-licence if they submitted applications in hardcopy form. HAD explained that regardless of the means (hardcopy form or online form) of applications, applicants can choose to receive e-licence.

(Post-meeting notes: HAD supplemented that, regardless of the means of applications, when HAD notified the applicants of the application result, the applicants would be invited to indicate if they prefer to make payment and collect the CoC in person at service counters or opt to make payment online (an email containing the general demand note with QR code for payment will be sent to the applicant) and receive an e-copy (in PDF format) of their CoC through emails.)

c) Introduction of a new performance pledge on new application for Clubhouse Certificate of Compliance

9. HAD representative gave a briefing on the subject with the presentation slides at [Annex 3](#). The OLA has streamlined the internal workflow for processing new Clubhouse CoC application and introduced a new performance pledge in Q1 2021. Under the new performance pledge, HAD will notify an applicant of the application result within 35 working days upon receipt of applicant's report of completion of the upgrading works.

10. A trade operator enquired whether the aforementioned new performance pledge also covered renewal application of Clubhouse CoC. HAD clarified that the performance pledges were not applicable to renewal applications as no upgrading works was involved in the renewal application. The CoC holders could approach the OLA case officer to trace the status of renewal applications if the validity of CoC had expired.

d) Revision of Fire Safety Requirements for emergency lighting systems for licensed/registered premises

11. HAD representative gave a briefing on the subject with the presentation slides at [Annex 4](#). In pace with technological advancement and enhancing the fire safety standards in licensed/ registered premises, a revised set of Fire Safety Requirements (FSRs) for emergency lighting systems (namely the Requirements for Emergency Lighting Systems with Central Power Supply [PPA/104 (5th Revision)] and Requirements for Self-contained Luminaires Emergency Lighting Systems [PPA/104(A) (5th Revision)]) was promulgated by the Fire Services Department and has been imposed on licensed/registered premises with effect from 1 June 2022.

12. The **Convenor** enquired if the licensed/ registered premises needed to revamp/ upgrade the emergency lighting systems to comply with the latest FSRs upon renewal of the Clubhouse CoC, should there be no change in the current emergency lighting systems. HAD advised that the revised FSRs for emergency lighting systems applied to new and A&A works applications only. Existing licensed/ registered premises could stick with the previous prevailing FSRs when they were first granted the Clubhouse CoC. Trade operators were welcome to revamp/ upgrade their existing emergency lighting systems to enhance fire safety.

1.2 Operational details on ventilation systems and air purifiers

13. HAD representative gave a briefing on the subject with the presentation slides at [Annex 5](#). To strengthen infection control measures in catering premises, catering businesses must register on FEHD's designated webpage to provide the information on air change / installation of air purifier in seating area of the respective catering premises under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F). HAD shared the operational details relating to ventilating systems and air purifiers to help club operators to master the knowledge in continuously meeting the statutory or epidemic prevention requirements for catering outlets inside Club premises.

(Post meeting notes: With the epidemic now coming to an end, the requirement of air change / installation of air purifier in seating area of the respective catering premises under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) has been removed since 29 December 2022. Catering premises are no longer required to comply with the relevant requirements.

Please refer to relevant [press release](#) for details (paragraph 2 under “Lifting social distancing measures except mask-wearing”).

1.3 Sickness allowance and employment protection under anti-epidemic measures

14. LD representative gave a briefing on the subject with the presentation slides at [Annex 6](#). The Employment (Amendment) Ordinance 2022 came into operation on 17 June 2022 to strengthen the protection of employees’ rights and benefits when they are absent from work due to their compliance with specific anti-epidemic requirements. It also makes clear their respective obligations and rights when employers request their employees for COVID-19 vaccination. Members may visit LD’s dedicated webpage on the Employment (Amendment) Ordinance 2022 (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/news/EAO2022.htm) for details and latest information.

15. The **Convenor** enquired how employers could know whether their employees had completed the isolation/quarantine earlier and wondered if employers had the right to request their employees to take Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) and submit the test results starting from day 6, as the isolation/quarantine period could be shortened for those who have already received at least two doses of vaccines if negative RAT results are obtained on two consecutive days starting from day 6 of the isolation/quarantine. LD explained that it was generally justifiable and reasonable for employers to collect their employee’s COVID-19 test results. Members may refer to the “Guidance for Employers on Collection and Use of Personal Data of Employees during COVID-19 Pandemic” issued by the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data in March 2022 for details. It was also advisable for employers to communicate with their employees to work out necessary arrangements for related matters, including the means of notifying the employers once the movement restriction has been finished early.

(Post meeting notes: The hyperlinks of [LD’s dedicated webpage](#) on the Employment (Amendment) Ordinance 2022 and the relevant guideline were sent to the trade attendees on 27 October 2022 as supplementary information to the meeting. Please also note the latest development of related anti-epidemic measures. For instance, the Government adjusted isolation and quarantine arrangements on 9 December 2022. Persons infected with COVID-19 may be discharged from isolation on Day 5 at the earliest if they obtain negative RAT results on both Day 4 and Day 5 of the isolation period. For close contacts, if they obtain negative results in all the daily RATs, they will be discharged from quarantine on Day 5. Furthermore, starting from 29 December 2022, the Government has ceased the quarantine arrangements for close

contacts and would not define close contacts and issue quarantine orders to them, and has removed the statutory Vaccine Pass requirement.)

Agenda item 2 – Date of the next meeting

16. The **Convenor** said that the secretariat would inform the trade of the date of the next meeting in due course.

**Secretariat, Business Liaison Group for Recreational Clubs
January 2023**