

# **General Housing Policies**

**on**

**Application for Public Housing and Home Ownership Scheme,  
Estate Management, Squatter Control and Clearance**

**Compiled by Management Branch  
Housing Department**

**June 2000**

**This Information Booklet on General Housing Policies is for general reference purpose only. Various policies outlined herein are subject to revision from time to time. For further details and updated information, please contact the respective estate/ interim housing/ temporary housing area office through the following telephone numbers -**

<b>Estate/Interim Housing/Temporary Housing Area Office (in alphabetical order)</b>	<b>Telephone No.</b>
Ap Lei Chau Estate	2554 4941
Butterfly Estate	2463 6271
Chai Wan Estate	2556 1287
Chak On Estate	2778 2628
Cheung Ching Estate	2495 2224
Cheung Fat Estate	2433 0277
Cheung Hang Estate	2495 5225
Cheung Hong Estate	2495 1202
Cheung Kwai Estate	2981 4658
Cheung On Estate	2495 4400
Cheung Sha Wan Estate	2386 1180
Cheung Shan Estate	2493 5227
Cheung Wah Estate	2669 2488
Choi Fai Estate	2707 9978
Choi Ha Estate	2758 6123
Choi Hung Estate	2320 3011
Choi Wan (I) Estate	2750 7211
Choi Wan (II) Estate	2795 2010
Choi Yuen Estate	2672 6927
Chuk Yuen (North) Estate	2351 1818
Chuk Yuen (South) Estate	2328 5535
Chun Shek Estate	2698 1234
Chung On Estate	2643 5077
Fat Tseung Street Temporary Housing Area	2725 7128
Fortune Estate	2204 1027
Fu Heng Estate	2666 5231

Fu Shan Estate	2351 2115
Fu Shin Estate	2661 1393
Fu Tung Estate	2109 0280
Fuk Loi Estate	2490 7834
Fung Tak Estate	2726 1890
Fung Wah Estate	2557 0337
Hau Tak (I) Estate	2706 0188
Hau Tak (II) Estate	2705 3442
Heng On Estate	2642 3460
Hin Keng Estate	2699 3082
Hing Man Estate	2558 6311
Hing Tin Estate	2340 6181
Hing Tung Estate	2567 8846
Hing Wah (I) Estate	2505 4228
Hing Wah (II) Estate	2557 0115
Homantin Estate	2711 0141
Hong Tung Estate	2513 1778
Hunghom Estate	2365 2387
Ka Fuk Estate	2677 9457
Kai Lok Temporary Housing Area	2799 8015
Kai Tin Estate	2346 1396
Kai Yip Estate	2757 3710
Kai Yiu Temporary Housing Area	2795 5676
Kam Peng Estate	2983 1522
Kin Sang Estate	2468 1949
King Lam Estate	2701 0155
Ko Yee Estate	2772 0462
Kwai Chung Estate	2427 9006
Kwai Fong Estate	2422 1808
Kwai Hing Estate	2420 2116
Kwai Shing (East) Estate	2428 3991
Kwai Shing East Interim Housing	2428 3991
Kwai Shing (West) Estate	2426 4121
Kwong Fuk Estate	2658 4430
Kwong Tin Estate	2349 8000
Kwong Yuen Estate	2647 3082

Lai King Estate	2743 3814
Lai Kok Estate	2361 0217
Lai On Estate	2725 5750
Lai Yiu Estate	2745 0012
Lam Tin (I) Estate	2775 5231
Lee On Estate	2643 5038
Lei Cheng Uk Estate	2728 2311
Lei Muk Shue Estate	2423 7458
Lei Tung Estate	2874 7211
Lek Yuen Estate	2691 7128
Leung King Estate	2465 1212
Lok Fu Estate	2336 5144
Lok Wah (North) Estate	2755 5551
Lok Wah (South) Estate	2755 6613
Long Bin Interim Housing	2474 0488
Long Ping Estate	2479 9111
Lower Ngau Tau Kok (I) Estate	2750 0368
Lower Ngau Tau Kok (II) Estate	2750 3231
Lower Wong Tai Sin (I) Estate	2328 9911
Lower Wong Tai Sin (II) Estate	2726 5675
Lung Hang Estate	2606 1073
Lung Ping Road Temporary Housing Area	2779 5132
Lung Tin Estate	2985 5807
Ma Hang Estate	2813 8140
Ma Tau Wai Estate	2715 6683
Mei Lam Estate	2604 9229
Mei Tung Estate	2338 0521
Ming Tak Estate	2623 6553
Model Housing Estate	2562 4255
Nam Cheong Estate	2725 6636
Nam Shan Estate	2777 3975
Ngan Wan Estate	2984 7000
North Point Estate	2561 3619
Oi Man Estate	2713 0121
On Ting Estate	2451 0321
On Yam Estate	2481 2998

Pak Tin Estate	2777 9883
Ping Shek Estate	2323 8121
Ping Tin Estate	2348 8681
Po Lam Estate	2701 0022
Pok Hong Estate	2648 1083
Po Tin Interim Housing	2463 3333
Po Tat Estate	2347 7424
Sai Kung Interim Housing	2792 7581
Sai Wan Estate	2817 2054
Sam Shing Estate	2458 6315
San Fat Estate	2459 6000
Sau Mau Ping (I) Estate	2346 5085
Sau Mau Ping (II) Estate	2347 7424
Sau Mau Ping (III) Estate	2346 8184
Sha Kok Estate	2649 0716
Sha Kok Mei Temporary Housing Area	2792 7581
Shan King Estate	2466 1177
Shatin Pass Estate	2320 7766
Shek Kip Mei Estate	2779 0231
Shek Lei (I) Estate	2420 6988
Shek Lei (II) Estate	2420 6987
Shek Lei (II) Interim Housing	2420 6987
Shek Wai Kok Estate	2416 5341
Shek Yam East Estate	2424 2942
Shek Yam Estate	2420 2687
Sheung Lok Estate	2713 9015
Sheung Tak Estate	2178 1113
Shui Pin Wai Estate	2479 4237
Shun Lee Estate	2341 8286
Shun On Estate	2342 8259
Shun Tin Estate	2797 2010
Siu Sai Wan Estate	2557 7301
So Uk Estate	2386 6549
Sun Chui Estate	2698 8988
Sun Tin Wai Estate	2604 6363
Tai Hang Tung Estate	2777 3357

Tai Hing Estate	2462 4601
Tai Ping Estate	2672 2083
Tai Wo Estate	2657 2808
Tai Wo Hau Estate	2429 9446
Tai Yuen Estate	2664 5238
Tak Tin Estate	2772 6840
Tin King Estate	2463 3636
Tin Ping Estate	2672 3181
Tin Shui (I) Estate	2445 1645
Tin Shui (II) Estate	2445 6818
Tin Wah Estate	2448 1723
Tin Tsz Estate	2476 8449
Tin Wan Estate	2538 5016
Tin Yiu (I) Estate	2448 1810
Tin Yiu (II) Estate	2146 1024
Tseung Kwan O Temporary Housing Area	2701 0870
Tsing Yi Estate	2495 7744
Tsui Lam Estate	2702 0006
Tsui Lok Estate	2515 1824
Tsui Ping North Estate	2793 2303
Tsui Ping South Estate	2772 5077
Tsui Wan Estate	2897 7479
Tsz Ching Estate	2325 0104
Tsz Lok Estate	2323 1787
Tsz Man Estate	2324 4176
Tung Tau (I) Estate	2716 3113
Tung Tau (II) Estate	2383 0011
Un Chau Estate	2728 7714
Upper Ngau Tau Kok Estate	2796 8163
Upper Wong Tai Sin Estate	2321 6269
Valley Road Estate	2363 0011
Wah Fu (I) Estate	2551 2011
Wah Fu (II) Estate	2551 4109
Wah Kwai Estate	2551 0660
Wah Ming Estate	2677 2002
Wah Sum Estate	2677 1772

Wan Hon Estate	2172 7363
Wan Tau Tong Estate	2652 2362
Wan Tsui Estate	2558 0180
Wang Tau Hom Estate	2336 0258
Wo Che Estate	2697 6183
Wo Lok Estate	2342 1935
Wong Chuk Hang Estate	2552 6692
Wu King Estate	2465 0621
Yau Oi Estate	2458 7710
Yiu On Estate	2641 1355
Yiu Tung Estate	2539 8336
Yue Wan Estate	2557 3281
Yuen Long Estate	2479 6128

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**Section A**

**Application for Public Housing,  
Transfer and Home Ownership Scheme**

## **Section A**

### **Chapter 1: Application for Public Rental Housing**

#### **Waiting List**

The Housing Department maintains a Waiting List (WL) through which applicants may apply for public housing in one out of four districts (i.e. Urban, Extended Urban, New Territories and Islands) for rehousing. To balance the supply and demand of public rental housing flats from WL applicants in Urban District so as to speed up flat allocation, starting from 14 January 1999, applicants registered after 31 March 1996 can only opt for public housing in the non-urban districts such as Extended Urban (including Shatin, Tsuen Wan, Tseung Kwan O and Tung Chung), New Territories (including Tai Po and Tuen Mun) and Islands. Nevertheless, elderly applicants and applicants who join the Families with Elderly Priority Scheme may apply for public housing in any district of their choice.

#### **(1) Application by Ordinary Families**

##### **(a) Eligibility**

- (i)** The applicant must be 18 years of age or above.
- (ii)** Person under 18 years of age must apply together with his/her parents or legal guardian.
- (iii)** The family size must not be less than two related persons. The relationship between the applicant and other members must either be husband and wife, parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, unmarried brothers and sisters or other relatives if dependent on and are willing to live together with the applicant.
- (iv)** All married family members included in the application must apply together with their spouse (divorcee, widow/widower or those whose spouse lives aboard excepted).
- (v)** Only one of the married children of the applicant may be included in the application.
- (vi)** On allocation, at least half of the family members including the applicant must have at least seven years' residence\* in Hong Kong. All children under the age of 18, regardless of their place of birth, will be deemed as having satisfied the seven-year residence rule\* provided that one of their parents has lived in Hong Kong for seven years\*. For two-person families, the applicant must have lived in Hong Kong for at least seven years\*.

\*To satisfy the seven-year residence rule, one must have lived in Hong Kong for at least seven years with unconditional stay (except for conditions on the limit of stay).

- (vii) The applicant or his/her family members must not, during the period from 24 months prior to the date of registration up to the date of intake,
- own or co-own any domestic property;
  - have entered into any agreement to purchase domestic property; or
  - own more than 50% share in any company which owns domestic property
- (Domestic property includes any post-war domestic property; uncompleted private domestic property, uncontrolled or self-occupied pre-war domestic property, roof top structure approved by the Buildings Authority, building lots and Small House Grants.)
- (viii) Ex-owners/ex-joint owners or former recipients of various subsidised home ownership schemes such as Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme, Mortgage Subsidy Scheme, Buy or Rent Option and Home Purchase Loan Scheme are not allowed to apply for public rental housing (PRH). Existing owners/joint owners/recipients (1-person households excepted) and their family members, and family members of ex-owners/former recipients, will not be bound by this restriction, if their names are deleted from the relevant records and the eligibility criteria are met.
- (ix) New applications from a whole family of PRH households will not be accepted.
- (x) The total monthly income and net asset value of the applicant and his/her family members must not exceed the maximum limits as laid down by the Housing Authority (HA). The current limits, subject to annual review, are as follows -

Income and Asset Limits for Single Persons and Ordinary Families

<u>Family Size</u>	<u>Income Limits (per month)</u>	<u>Net Asset Limits</u>
1 person	\$ 6,600	\$220,000
2 persons	\$11,900	*\$330,000
3 persons	\$14,800	*\$390,000
4 persons	\$17,700	\$470,000
5 persons	\$19,200	\$530,000
6 persons	\$20,700	\$600,000
7 persons	\$23,500	\$660,000
8 persons	\$26,200	\$700,000

9 persons	\$28,700	\$700,000
10 persons or more	\$30,700	\$700,000

(Effective from 1.4.2000)

\* Asset limit for small nuclear households of two and three persons whose members are all aged 60 or above is the same as that of 4-person households i.e. \$470,000.

Income Limits for Unrelated Elderly Persons

<u>No. of Persons</u>	<u>Income Limits (per month)</u>
2 persons	\$14,300
3 persons	\$17,800
4 persons	\$21,200

(Effective from 1.4.2000)

(b) Allocation

Allocation of public housing units is strictly in accordance with the order of priority of applications on the WL and the districts chosen. The Department will not give priority to applications on medical grounds or with any other reasons such as unsatisfactory living conditions. However, if the applicant can produce documents (e.g. Eviction Order issued by the Lands Tribunal) to prove that he/she will shortly be evicted from his/her present abode, priority will be given to process his/her application provided that his/her application is due for allocation of flat within the coming twelve months. Besides, for those single persons living in PRH/Interim Housing (IH) (including Temporary Housing Area) and already registered with their family members on the WL before 21 January 1995, a credit of waiting time equivalent to the period of residence in PRH/IH up to a maximum of three years will be given.

(2) Application by Elderly Persons

The Department has introduced a number of housing schemes, under which public housing is provided for the elderly on a priority basis. Under normal circumstances, eligible applicants under the schemes can have their waiting time shortened or enjoy special allocation arrangements.

*Single Elderly Persons Priority Scheme*

(a) *Eligibility*

- (i) The applicant must be 58 years of age or over at the time of application and must have attained the age of 60 at the time of allocation.

- (ii) The applicant must have at least seven years' residence in Hong Kong at the time of allocation.
- (iii) The monthly income and net asset value of the applicant must not exceed the current maximum limits as laid down by the HA.
- (iv) The applicant has to satisfy all appropriate eligibility criteria applicable to ordinary families.

(b) *Allocation*

Applicants will be allocated either Housing for Senior Citizens, converted flats or self-contained flats. The Housing for Senior Citizens comprises of toilet and kitchen in each unit with separate bedrooms to accommodate a total of 3 to 4 elderly persons; warden service is also provided therein.

*Elderly Persons Priority Scheme*

(a) *Eligibility*

- (i) Two or more related or unrelated elderly persons who agree to live together upon allocation are eligible to apply.
- (ii) All of them must be 58 years of age or above at the time of application and must have attained the age of 60 by the time of allocation.
- (iii) The total monthly income and net asset value of the elderly persons must not exceed the prevailing maximum limits as laid down by the HA.
- (iv) The applicant has to satisfy all appropriate eligibility criteria applicable to ordinary families.

(b) *Allocation*

Normally, allocation will be made within two years.

*Families with Elderly Persons Priority Scheme*

(a) *Eligibility*

- (i) The applicant's family must be composed of at least two generations with at least one elderly relative and at least one member of the younger generation aged 18 or above.
- (ii) The elderly person must have attained the age of 60 at the time of investigation and is willing to live together with the family upon allocation of a flat.
- (iii) The family has to satisfy all appropriate eligibility criteria applicable to ordinary families.

- (iv) The application must have been registered on the WL for not less than two years.
- (b) *Allocation*
  - (i) Eligible families under this priority scheme will have their housing allocation advanced by three years.
  - (ii) Normally, the elderly will be the head of the household though he/she may nominate an adult family member to be the tenant. Under the latter circumstances, the elderly and the prospective tenant have to sign an undertaking to the effect that the prospective tenant will take care of the elderly and to live together.

*Special Scheme for Families with Elderly Persons*

- (a) *Eligibility*
  - (i) The applicant's family must be a nuclear family plus at least two elderly parents or dependent relatives. The elderly parents or dependent relatives may apply together with the young family under one application or submit their own applications.
  - (ii) They must satisfy all appropriate eligibility criteria applicable to ordinary families.
- (b) *Allocation*
  - (i) This scheme allows young families to apply together with their elderly parents or dependent relatives for two separate flats under one or two tenancies in the same block of a public housing estate in new town.
  - (ii) If the young families apply together with their elderly parents or dependent relatives and their eligibility is established, housing allocation will be advanced by two years.
  - (iii) If the elderly parents or dependent relatives apply for public housing separately, their applications must have been registered on the WL for not less than two years. Should the application of the young family mature first, investigation of the elderly parents'/relatives' application will be advanced to the same time as that of the young family. However, if the elderly parents'/relatives' application matures first, no advancement in waiting time will be given to the young family. Upon confirmation of their eligibility, housing allocation for both families will be advanced by two years.
  - (iv) Applicants who are allocated public housing under the scheme must observe the terms of the tenancy agreement and take up the responsibility of looking after their elderly relatives.



(3) Application by Single Persons

The HA provides single-person units to single persons who are eligible for permanent housing. Such units include purpose-built units in new estates and converted units in existing estates. Single persons who are interested may apply for such units through the Single Persons Waiting List (SPWL).

(a) *Eligibility*

- (i) The total monthly income and net asset value of the applicant must not exceed the prevailing maximum limits as laid down by the HA.
- (ii) The applicant has to satisfy all appropriate eligibility criteria applicable to ordinary families.

(b) *Addition of Family Members*

An applicant on the SPWL may, upon marriage or family reunion, request addition of family members in order to be qualified as an ordinary family on the General Waiting List. A credit of waiting time equivalent to half of the waiting time on SPWL up to a maximum of three years will be granted. For example, when an applicant who has been on the SPWL for seven years requests addition of family members, the seven years' waiting time will only be counted as three years on the General Waiting List.

## **Section A**

### **Chapter 2: Compassionate Rehousing**

Compassionate rehousing is recommended by the Director of Social Welfare (DSW). Such cases in general involve hardships of various nature on the part of the applicants like serious illness, disability or social problem.

The public may apply directly to Family Services Centres or Social Security Field Units of the Social Welfare Department (SWD), or through the Medical Social Unit under the subvented hospitals, voluntary agencies as approved by the SWD or Probation Offices for compassionate rehousing. After confirmation of the eligibility of an applicant through investigation, the DSW will recommend the case to the Housing Department for allocation of a suitable flat.

## **Section A**

### **Chapter 3: Allocation Standards for Public Rental Housing**

In respect of the allocation of public rental housing, dual allocation standards have been adopted by the Housing Authority since 1 December 1991 as follows -

- (1) a minimum allocation standard of 5.5m<sup>2</sup> internal floor area (IFA) per person with a “median rent-income ratio” (“MRIR”) not exceeding 15%;  
or
- (2) a minimum allocation standard of 7m<sup>2</sup> IFA per person with a “MRIR” not exceeding 18.5%.

Prospective tenants will be asked by the staff of the Department to opt for one of the above standards during vetting interviews. Subject to the availability of resources, allocation will be made in accordance with their preference. If a prospective tenant does not want to take up a flat of his choice offered under the higher allocation standard because of high rent, he can accept either a smaller unit or a refurbished flat at a lower rent in another estate.

To maximize the utilization of housing resources and to look after the low-income households, it is the current practice of the Department to refurbish vacant flats in post-1973 and the former Housing Authority estates and then offer them to tenants in need of rent assistance.

## **Section A**

### **Chapter 4: Transfer**

#### **Mutual Exchange**

Public housing tenants who wish to move to other estates of their choice through exchanging their existing flats with those of other tenants may approach the “Tenants Mutual Exchange Bureau” (TMEB) at the Hong Kong Housing Authority Customer Service Centre, Podium Level 2 at 3, Wang Tau Hom South Road, Kowloon or their estate office for registration. The tenants should bring along their identity cards and the photo-copies of the identity cards and birth certificates of all family members, the tenancy agreement/card, current rent card and \$20.- for the registration fee. All applications will be entered into the Bureau’s computer system and searches will be made to see whether a suitable exchange can be arranged.

Each registration is valid for two years only during which the TMEB will endeavour to arrange a maximum of four matches for the applicants. If the applicant has rejected all the four matches, his/her application will automatically be cancelled. Besides, he/she will be debarred from registration on the TMEB for one year from the date of his/her final refusal.

Tenants should not make any unauthorized exchanges themselves, otherwise, they will breach the tenancy conditions thereby resulting in termination of their tenancies by the Housing Authority.

#### **Internal/External Transfer**

##### **(1) Special Transfer**

Tenants who have genuine difficulties in continuing living in their existing flats due to special circumstances or on medical/social grounds may apply for transfer to a flat in the same or another estate. Should tenants in financial difficulties find it hard to afford the existing rent, they may request transfer to flats of a cheaper rent in another estate. Those tenants who are seriously handicapped or in poor health conditions and in need of a private toilet or washing and cooking facilities may also apply for transfer to a suitable flat in another estate.

##### **(2) Pre-redevelopment Transfer**

To fully utilize the limited resources, tenants in estates scheduled for redevelopment within three years may apply for “pre-redevelopment transfer”. When suitable flats in new estates are available, these tenants

will be invited by notices to apply. Upon relocation to new flats and surrender of their existing public housing units, tenants will be granted a removal allowance.

(3) Transfer for Major Repairs/Improvement Programmes

Tenants who have to move out due to structural problems or comprehensive repair and improvement works of their block will be allocated another suitable flat by the Housing Department. These tenants are also entitled to a removal allowance upon surrender of their existing public housing unit.

(4) Transfer for Creation of Suitable Vacancies in Older Estates

In order to create suitable vacancies at certain old estates to meet demand from rehousing categories such as redevelopment and clearances, the Housing Department will set aside a number of flats in new estates for application by the tenants of older estates.

(5) Relief of Overcrowding

Under the present policy, families living in overcrowded conditions and possessing no domestic property may apply to move to larger units. Families occupying public rental housing accommodation with density less than 5.5m<sup>2</sup> Internal Floor Area (IFA) per person may apply for overcrowding relief (OR) through internal transfer or external decantation to new/vacated flats in NT estates. Furthermore, those qualified households living in urban/extended urban estates may apply for transfer to vacated flats in urban/extended urban estates; and to new flats in these estates if they are currently occupying less than 4.5m<sup>2</sup> IFA per person.

Tenants seeking OR are subject to income test. If their family income is found to have exceeded the Subsidy Income Limit (please refer to Chapter 3 of Section B for details), they will be required to pay extra rent (i.e. 1.5 times or double net rent plus rates as appropriate) upon successful reallocation regardless of their length of residence in public housing.

Vacated flats in **blocks due for redevelopment within three years** may be used for OR within the same block. When such vacancies arise, they will be advertised on block basis to invite applications from overcrowded families. In case the vacated flats advertised outnumber the applications received, the flat will first be allocated to applicants living adjacent/opposite to the vacated flats under Automatic Offer (AO). Any flat which cannot be disposed of by way of AO for whatever reasons will be allocated to another eligible family within the same block with priority being determined on the basis of degree of overcrowding. If the reverse is true, the vacated flats will be allocated to those families with the highest living density.

Vacated flats in **blocks not due for redevelopment within three years** will be returned to the Applications Section for central allocation in the

first instance. Those uncommitted for other purposes with priority will then be released on a district basis for OR. Upon receiving the flat list, the estate Housing Manager will send invitation letters to eligible households asking them to indicate their interest in taking up the available flats. Having received their responses, the estate Housing Manager will offer the flats to eligible families in accordance with a priority list, which is drawn up in the order of living density, household size and length of residence of the existing tenancy. All things being equal, priority on the allocation would be determined by ballot. Tenants who have refused offers for three times in the absence of good reasons will be debarred from OR for one year.

Eligible overcrowded families are usually allocated larger flats. Under special circumstances or if the vacated flats are situated in blocks due for redevelopment within three years, allocation of additional flat(s) for relief of overcrowding may be considered by the estate Housing Manager. Nevertheless, families who have obtained additional flat(s) for OR will not be allowed to acquire extra housing benefits, e.g. extra entitlement to purchase additional Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme flats or to acquire additional loan under the Home Purchase Loan Scheme.

## Section A

### Chapter 5: Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) and Private Sector Participation Scheme (PSPS)

#### Application

Two kinds of application forms, Green Form and White Form, are made available for different categories of applicants. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age and have lived in Hong Kong for at least 7 years with unconditional stay (except for conditions on the limit of stay)\*. All married family members, including the applicants, must apply together with their spouse (with exception of those who have legally divorced). An unborn child of at least 16 weeks' gestation as at the date of application will be counted as one family member for the purpose of applying for HOS/PSPS flat. Persons who have previously purchased a domestic flat under the HOS/PSPS, or under any assisted housing scheme administered by the Housing Authority(HA)/ the Housing Society(HS) or have obtained a loan/subsidies under the Home Purchase Loan Scheme(HPLS); and their spouses shall not apply again. However, other family members whose deletion from the relevant records has been approved would not be bound by this restriction.

From Phase 17B HOS sales exercise onwards, single-person households with Green Form entitlement are allowed to purchase small HOS flats with a saleable area of about 20m<sup>2</sup>. From Phase 20A HOS sales exercise onwards, single-person Green Form households are also allowed to purchase HOS flats of area below 28m<sup>2</sup> or the vacant small flats of saleable area under 25m<sup>2</sup> in Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) estates. From phase 21B HOS sales exercise onwards, single-person households are also allowed to purchase HOS flats by using White Form. Besides, both Green Form and White Form singleton applicants are allowed to purchase HOS flats with saleable area not exceeding 51m<sup>2</sup>. However, if they decide to purchase these larger flats, their turn for selection of flat will come only when all the family households have completed flat selection. From Phase 22A HOS sales exercise onwards, both Green Form and White Form singleton applicants are allowed to purchase flats of any size after all the family households have completed flat selection.

- \* From Phase 20A HOS sales exercise onwards, domestic tenants of HA/HS estates, authorized occupants of Interim Housing (including Temporary Housing Areas) and Cottage Areas of the HA, "Green Form Certificate" holders with rental eligibility, Temporary Housing Areas and Cottage Areas clearers who are holding a "Green Form Certificate" (without rental eligibility) and Estate Assistants in possession of a "Letter of Assurance" are not subject to the restriction on length of residence in Hong Kong.

not subject to the restriction on length of residence in Hong Kong.

### **Green Form**

The following categories of persons may apply with a Green Form provided that they surrender their existing public housing/interim housing (including temporary housing areas) unit/cottage or “Green Form Certificate” upon purchase of an HOS/PSPS flat -

- (1) Domestic tenants of HA/HS estates;
- (2) Authorized occupants of Interim Housing (including Temporary Housing Areas) and Cottage Areas of the HA;
- (3) Licensees of public housing units holding a valid fixed-term licence issued by the Housing Department due to implementation of the Policies on “Safeguarding Rational Allocation of Public Housing Resources” or “Grant of New Tenancy”;
- (4) Interim Housing Licensees holding a valid fixed-term licence issued by the Housing Department due to implementation of the Policies on “Management Arrangements for Interim Housing” or “Admission into Interim Housing”; and
- (5) Waiting List applicants, carees, disaster victims and junior civil servants holding “Green Form Certificates” and Estate Assistants in possession of a “Letter of Assurance” issued by the Housing Department.

### **White Form**

All other applicants (including residents of HA/HS estates who plan to split from their present households without surrendering their public housing units) may apply with a White Form if they satisfy the following requirements -

- (1) For applications from a family, the relationship between family members and the applicant should fall into one of the following categories :
  - (a) husband and wife (the marriage certificate should be issued at a date before the closing date of application);
  - (b) parents and children;
  - (c) grandparents and grandchildren; and
  - (d) other relatives.

Categories (a) and (b) above are classified as nuclear families while categories (c) and (d) as non-nuclear families. All nuclear families have priority over non-nuclear ones in flat selection. Families under category (c) will be regarded as nuclear families if proof of the death of the grandchildren’s parents can be provided.



Family members included in the application should live with the applicant.

The spouse of each of the family members should be listed in the same application with the exception of those who have legal proof of divorce. The parents or legal guardians of family members who are below the age of 18 should also be included in the same application.

- (2) The total family income and net asset value must not exceed \$31,000 per month and \$700,000 respectively. The income and net asset value limits for singleton applicants are \$15,500 and \$350,000 respectively.
- (3) The applicant or his/her family members must not, within 24 months immediately prior to the closing date for submitting the application until purchase of a flat under HOS/PSPS,
  - own or co-own any domestic property;
  - have entered into any agreement to purchase domestic property; or
  - own more than 50% share in any company which owns domestic property.

(Domestic property includes any post-war domestic property; uncompleted private domestic property, uncontrolled or self-occupied pre-war domestic property, roof top structure approved by the Buildings Authority, building lots and Small House Grants.)

Flat owners of the HA's TPS estates are allowed to retain their Green Form eligibility in purchase of HOS/PSPS flats under White Form within 10 years from the date of assignment of their TPS flats. The normal White Form income/asset, domestic property ownership restrictions and residence criteria will be waived.

White Form applicants from nuclear families who opt to join the "Priority Scheme for Families with Elderly Members" (i.e. to make a joint application with at least one elderly member aged 60 or above) will have their White Form status upgraded to Ordinary Green Form status. To deter abuses, the following measures will be taken-

- (1) Successful applicants and the elderly members for HOS/PSPS have to undertake their willingness to live together by signing a joint declaration;
- (2) To declare the occupancy position of their flat on a biennial basis;
- (3) Except for permanent departure, death or other compassionate reasons recommended by the Director of Social Welfare, the name of the elderly member could not be deleted from the record;
- (4) It is also mandatory for the elderly member to become one of the joint owners of the purchased flat; and

- (5) Having opted to join this scheme, the applicants may not alter their decision afterwards or else their applications will be cancelled.

### **Allocation of HOS Flats**

Ballot has been adopted by the HA to determine whether an HOS application is successful or not as well as its priority on flat selection. To increase the chances for repeated unsuccessful “White Form” and “Ordinary Green Form” HOS applicants, the HA endorsed in July 1996 an arrangement under which an additional registration number will be given to “White Form” and “Ordinary Green Form” applicants for each unsuccessful application they had previously made. The new arrangement will count from Phase 18B HOS sales exercise with extra registration numbers being allocated from Phase 18C HOS sales exercise onwards. Additional registration numbers will only be allocated to those applicants who have not had any chance for flat selection in previous HOS sales exercises. No additional number will be given to those who have been confirmed to be ineligible and who have been invited to attend office interview or to select an HOS flat but have chosen not to turn up or to buy.

The quotas for Green Form and White Form applicants for each phase of the HOS will be decided by the HA.

## **Section A**

### **Chapter 6: Priority in the Purchase of Home Ownership Scheme (HOS)/Private Sector Participation Scheme (PSPS) Flats by Using Green Form**

#### **Priority Under Mortgage Subsidy Scheme**

Eligible local residents affected by Housing Authority (HA)'s Comprehensive Redevelopment Programme will be accorded priority in flat selection in acquiring HOS flats set aside under the Mortgage Subsidy Scheme.

#### **First Priority**

The following categories of Green Form applicants will be accorded the first priority in flat selection -

- (1) Tenants who are living in blocks affected by the HA's Comprehensive Redevelopment Programme and are formally notified of the redevelopment details; \*
- (2) Tenants who are required to vacate their flats to facilitate structural repair under the HA's Comprehensive Repair and Improvement Programme;
- (3) Cottage Areas residents who are eligible for public rental housing upon announcement of the clearance of their Cottage Areas; \*
- (4) Households holding a valid fixed-term licence due to the implementation of the Policies on "Rational Allocation of Public Housing Resources" or "Grant of New Tenancy" and not owning any domestic properties; and
- (5) Market-rent payer not owning any domestic properties.

#### **Second Priority**

The following categories of Green Form applicants will be accorded the second priority in flat selection -

- (1) Tenants who are living in housing blocks due for redevelopment within five years under the HA's Comprehensive Redevelopment Programme but who have not yet been formally notified of the redevelopment details; \*
- (2) Residents of Cottage Areas due for clearance within three years under the HA's Cottage Area Clearance Exercise but who have not yet been formally notified of the clearance details\*;

- (3) Prospective public housing tenants who have been found eligible for public housing in the wake of clearance or natural disasters or under the quota for junior civil servants and are holding a valid “Green Form Certificate”;
  - (4) Estate Assistants who have fulfilled the requirement regarding minimum years of service and are holding a “Letter of Assurance”;
  - (5) “Green Form Certificate” holders who have been registered on the Waiting List for not less than five years and whose eligibility for public housing has been established. (As for those applicants who have been on the Waiting List for over three years but less than five years, even if their eligibility for public housing has been established, the second priority accorded to them is only applicable to the purchase of a flat in the non-urban area);
  - (6) Tenants who are paying double net rent plus rates and not in possession of any domestic properties (without quota restriction);
  - (7) Tenants who have been paying 1.5 times net rent plus rates for a continuous period of three years or more and not in possession of any domestic properties (with quota restriction of 500 flats in each sales exercise);
  - (8) Households holding a valid fixed-term licence due to the implementation of the Policy on “Management Arrangements for Interim Housing” and not owning any domestic properties;
  - (9) Households holding a valid fixed-term licence due to the implementation of the Policy on “Admission into Interim Housing” and satisfying the normal eligibility criteria for White Form applicants (including the criteria on family composition, income and asset limits, years of residence in Hong Kong and ownership of domestic properties); and
  - (10) Tenants of existing "converted one-person flats" with shared facilities who are not in possession of any domestic properties (without quota restriction).
- \* These categories of applicants (except those market-rent payers), can apply for the mortgage subsidies under the Mortgage Subsidy Scheme to finance their purchase of HOS flats.

### **Third Priority**

To encourage families to live with elderly, starting from Phase 20A HOS sales exercise, the following families who opt to join the “Priority Scheme for Families with Elderly Members” will have their HOS/PSPS application priorities upgraded from ordinary green form status to third priority status -

- (1) Families comprising at least two generations with at least one of the members of the older generation aged 60 or above and at least one of the members of the younger generation aged 18 or above);and
- (2) Families comprising a married couple and at least one elderly member aged 60 or above.

To deter abuses, the following measures will be taken -

- (1) Successful applicants and the elderly members for HOS/PSPS have to signify their willingness to live together by signing a joint declaration;
- (2) To declare the occupancy position of their flat on a biennial basis;
- (3) Except for permanent departure, death or other compassionate reasons recommended by the Director of Social Welfare, the name of the elderly member could not be deleted from the record;
- (4) It is also mandatory for the elderly member to become one of the joint owners of the purchased flat; and
- (5) Having opted to join this scheme, the applicants may not change their mind afterwards or else their applications will be cancelled.

## **Section A**

### **Chapter 7: Extended Green Form Status For Waiting List Applicants**

Since January 1985, the Housing Authority has implemented a policy under which Waiting List applicants satisfying certain requirements are allowed to apply for Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme (HOS/PSPS) flats by using a Green Form.

All prospective tenants who have been registered on the Waiting List for five years or more may apply for HOS/PSPS flats with a Green Form and enjoy second priority in selecting HOS/PSPS flats in any district.

Prospective tenants who have been registered on the Waiting List for three to five years may also apply by using a Green Form and enjoy second priority in selecting HOS/PSPS flats in the non-urban area (i.e., excluding Hong Kong Island and urban Kowloon), or alternatively apply for HOS/PSPS flats in any district with priority in selection of flat being the same as that of ordinary public housing tenants.

For prospective tenants who have been registered on the Waiting List for less than three years, they may choose to apply for HOS/PSPS flats in any district by using an ordinary Green Form.

Waiting List households whose incomes exceed the stipulated limits but are below the HOS income limits and whose waiting time is not less than two years with at least half of family members including the applicant living in Hong Kong for seven years or more with unconditional stay (except for conditions on the limit of stay) may apply for HOS/PSPS flats by using an ordinary Green Form.

Alternatively, all households with Green Form eligibility may apply for the purchase of a private property or a flat in HOS Secondary Market under the Home Purchase Loan Scheme. Those who have successfully applied for a loan under the Home Purchase Loan Scheme and an HOS/PSPS flat at the same time may only opt for either one and forfeit the other and have to give up their right to the allocation of public rental unit(s).

## **Section A**

### **Chapter 8: Sale of Flats in the Secondary Market**

To increase turnover of public rental housing (PRH) flats and efficiency in the utilization of limited housing resources, the Housing Authority (HA) established the Secondary Market for Sale of Home Ownership Scheme (HOS)/Private Sector Participation Scheme (PSPS) Flats (SMS) in June 1997. HOS/PSPS flats owners may sell their flats in the third year from the date of first assignment from HA onwards in the SMS to sitting PRH tenants [including tenants of HA and Housing Society (HS) and residents of Temporary Housing Areas (THA)/ Interim Housing (IH)/ Cottage Areas (CA)]\* and Green Form Certificate Holders at a price to be negotiated between the parties. Green Form applicants of Home Purchase Loan Scheme can make use of the loan/subsidy for the purpose of purchasing HOS/PSPS flats in the secondary market with effect from 23 July 1998. During the transaction, the original HOS owner will not be required to pay the premium, however, the purchaser will inherit the liability to pay the premium should he/she seek to sell the flat in the open market later on. With effect from 15 April 2000, rental flats sold under Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) Phase 1 can be resold under the SMS.

#### **Eligibility to Purchase an HOS/PSPS/TPS Flat in the SMS**

- (1) Domestic tenants of estates of HA and HS, authorized occupants of IH (including THA) and CA of the HA may, upon the endorsement of their eligibility by their estate/IH/CA offices, apply to purchase HOS/PSPS/TPS flats in the SMS. They are required to surrender their existing PRH/IH/Cottage units upon purchase of an HOS/PSPS/TPS flat.
- (2) All Green Form certificate holders and Estate Assistants holding a Letter of Assurance issued by the Housing Department may apply. They are required to give up their eligibility for allocation of PRH flats after execution of the assignment on successful purchase.

The above applicants must satisfy the following requirements -

- (1) the applicant must be 18 years of age or above;
- (2) the applicant and all family members, if married, must apply together with their spouse (with the exception of those who have legal proof of divorce);
- (3) the applicant must have lived in Hong Kong for at least 7 years. However, domestic tenants of HA/HS estates, authorized occupants of IH (including THA) and CA of the HA, "Green Form certificate" holders with rental

- eligibility and Estate Assistants in possession of a “Letter of Assurance” are not subject to the restriction on length of residence in Hong Kong; and
- (4) the applicant and his/her family members must not breach any conditions of the existing tenancy agreement/licence/permit (applicable only to tenants of HA/HS, licensees of IH and permittees of CA).
- \* Ex-owners of HOS/PSPS flat, ex-Home Purchase Loan recipients and their spouse are not eligible to purchase an HOS/PSPS/TPS flat in the SMS. Other family members whose deletion from the relevant records has been approved would not be bound by the restriction.



## **Section A**

### **Chapter 9: Home Purchase Loan Scheme**

The Home Purchase Loan Scheme (HPLS) was introduced in 1988 to give rental estate tenants and prospective tenants the option of obtaining interest-free loans to purchase flats in the private sector. To make the scheme more attractive, a number of changes were subsequently put into effect including increasing the loan amount, extending the scheme to households in the private sector who are eligible to apply for Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats and giving successful applicants an option of acquiring a monthly subsidy in making mortgage repayments instead of the interest-free loan.

According to the arrangements approved by the Housing Authority (HA) in July 1999, an interest-free loan of \$400,000 (if repaid in 20 years) or \$500,000 (if repaid in 14 years) is offered to assist successful applicants from families using White Form in purchasing private sector flats of not more than 30 years old. Applicants may alternatively opt for a non-repayable monthly subsidy of \$3,400 for a period of 48 months. In November 1999, the HA endorsed to accept applications from single persons. However they can only entitle to a loan/subsidy at half of the above rates. They may receive a loan of \$200,000 (if repaid in 20 years) or \$250,000 (if repaid in 14 years) or monthly subsidy of \$1,700 for a period of 48 months.

To encourage more sitting tenants to participate in the scheme, the loan amount and the corresponding monthly subsidy for successful applicants from families using Green Form are set at a maximum of \$600,000 (if repaid in 20 years) or \$800,000 (if repaid in 13 years) and \$5,100 a month payable for 48 months respectively. The loan/subsidy for singleton applicants using White Form are \$300,000 (if repaid in 20 years) or \$400,000 (if repaid in 13 years) or \$2,550 a month payable for 48 months. Green Form applicants may also use the loan/monthly subsidy to purchase flats under the HOS Secondary Market Scheme.

#### **Green Form Application**

The following categories of persons may apply by using Green Form -

- (1) domestic tenants of estates of the HA/ Housing Society (HS) and authorized occupants of Interim Housing (including Temporary Housing Areas) and Cottage Areas of the HA, regardless of their income and property ownership, provided that they surrender their existing public housing/interim housing unit/cottage upon acquiring a

loan/subsidy under the HPLS;

- (2) applicants from General Waiting List, junior civil servants and persons affected by clearances or natural disasters holding valid “Green Form certificates” issued by the Housing Department, provided that they give up their right to allocation of public housing unit upon acquiring a loan/subsidy under the HPLS; and
- (3) Estate Assistants in possession of a “Letter of Assurance”.

The above applicants must fulfill the following conditions -

- (1) singleton applicant should be unmarried or divorced or whose spouse is deceased or has not been permitted to reside in Hong Kong;
- (2) applicants' families should consist of members who are related to each other; and
- (3) the applicant must be at least 18 years old.

### **White Form Application**

All other singletons or families (including residents of HA/HS estates, who plan to split from their present households without surrendering their public housing units) may apply for the HPLS by using “White Form” on condition that they fulfill the following conditions -

- (1) singleton applicant should be unmarried or divorced or whose spouse is deceased or has not been permitted to reside in Hong Kong;
- (2) the family consists of two or more persons who are related to each other;
- (3) the total family income does not exceed \$31,000 per month, for singleton applicants monthly income should not exceed \$15,500;
- (4) the total family net asset value does not exceed \$700,000, for singleton applicants net asset value should not exceed \$350,000;
- (5) the applicant must be at least 18 years old;
- (6) the applicant must have lived in Hong Kong for at least seven years; and his/her stay in Hong Kong is not subject to any condition of stay (except for conditions concerning the limit of stay) and;
- (7) the applicant and his/her family members must not, at any time within 24 months immediately prior to the date of submission of the application and up to the time when the letter of Approval-in-principle is issued to the applicant or when he/she enters into an agreement for sale and purchase (provisional or otherwise) in respect of a flat subsidized under the HPLS (whichever is earlier),

- own or co-own any domestic property;
- have entered into any agreement to purchase domestic property; or
- own more than 50% share in any company which owns domestic property

(Domestic property includes any post-war domestic property; uncompleted private domestic property, uncontrolled or self-occupied pre-war domestic property, roof top structure approved by the Buildings Authority, building lots and Small House Grants.)

## **Section A**

### **Chapter 10: Tenants Purchase Scheme**

To bring home ownership within the reach of the public housing tenants, the Housing Authority (HA) endorsed the Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) in December 1997 to provide opportunity for sitting tenants to buy their own flats at reasonable and affordable prices. Between 1998 and 2007, at least 250,000 public rental housing (PRH) flats will be offered for sale on a phased basis.

#### **Eligibility to Purchase a TPS Flat**

Sitting tenants of selected TPS estates can apply to purchase a TPS flat subject to fulfillment of the following conditions -

- (1) The applicant must be the tenant or a member of the tenant's family who is an authorized occupant of the PRH flat. All authorized occupants of the tenancy agreement should be included in the same application.
- (2) The applicant must be 18 years of age or above.
- (3) All family members must apply together with their spouse (divorcee, widow/widower or those with spouse living aboard excepted).
- (4) The applicant and his/her family members must not be in breach of conditions of the existing tenancy agreement.
- (5) The household is not residing in -
  - a Housing for Senior Citizen unit
  - a quarter for Chief Estate Assistant/Senior Estate Assistant/Estate Assistant
  - a flat being rented to non-domestic tenant
  - a flat being occupied under a licence
  - a flat for which a Notice to Quit has been served
- (6) Single-person households are only allowed to purchase flats up to 25m<sup>2</sup> saleable area in size.

Upon purchase of a TPS flat currently occupied by the tenant, he/she must terminate the respective tenancy. Should the TPS flat purchased be a vacant unit in the estate, the tenant must vacate the PRH flat currently occupied by him/her.

## **Future Eligibility for Other Housing Benefits**

TPS flat owners will be permitted to apply for the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) or the Home Purchase Loan Scheme (HPLS) within 10 years from assignment of the TPS flat by using “White Form”. However, he/she should resale the TPS flat to the HA (and return the credit to HA) within 3 months from the execution of assignment of the flat bought under HOS or HPLS, or to sell the TPS flat in the Secondary Market from the third year onwards to a Green Form purchaser.

## **Section A**

### **Chapter 11 : Buy-or-Rent Option**

To provide opportunity for prospective tenants to become home owners without passing through the route of public rental housing (PRH), the Housing Authority (HA) endorsed the introduction of the Buy-or-Rent Option (BRO) in May 1999. The first phase of the scheme was implemented in June 1999 and there will be at least one BRO sale exercise each year. The HA has also endorsed the interface of BRO with the Mortgage Subsidy Scheme (MSS), so that purchasers can choose flats\* from either projects of BRO and MSS on sale.

#### **Target Groups**

The following categories of persons may apply for BRO -

- (1) Waiting List (WL) applicants who have satisfied the prevailing eligibility criteria and are due for PRH allocation in the coming year;
- (2) Comprehensive Redevelopment Programme (CRP) estate tenants, Temporary Housing Areas (THAs)/Cottage Areas (CAs) and squatter clearances who have satisfied the prevailing PRH eligibility criteria; and
- (3) Junior civil servants under the Civil Service Public Housing Quota and Estate Assistants of the Housing Department.

The WL applications of Category (1) applicants will be suspended during the intervening period if they submit formal application to purchase BRO flats. If they are unable to select a suitable flat, they may choose to wait for the allocation of a PRH flat according to their turn on the WL. Successful applicants are not allowed to reinstate their WL application upon signing of the sales and purchase agreement. For Category (2) applicants, their participation in a second phase will be subject to their undertaking to vacate the structure concerned before clearance day.

#### **Selection Priority**

The following applicants who are living in accommodations with date of clearance announced are accorded first priority in flat selection provided they are eligible for PRH -

- (1) tenants of redevelopment estates;

- (2) squatter clearerees; and
- (3) THA and CA clearerees.

Other applicants are accorded second priority.

### **Mortgage subsidies**

Purchasers may enjoy a monthly mortgage subsidy payment\* in six years amounting to a total of \$162,000.00. However, CRP estate tenants who are paying **market rent**, Estate Assistants and Junior Civil Servants who do not satisfy the WL income and asset tests are **not entitled** for such subsidies.

\* Singleton households can purchase flats of any size after all the family households have completed flat selection and enjoy half the amount of mortgage subsidy payment.

## **Section A**

### **Chapter 12: Housing Information Centre**

#### **Purpose**

To assist enquirers displaced by redevelopment of private buildings (hereinafter called “enquirers”) in solving their housing problems and other problems arising from relocation, the Housing Department has set up six Housing Information Centres at Hong Kong West, Wan Chai, Yaumatei, Hung Hom, Sham Shui Po and Tsuen Wan respectively to provide enquirers with information and advice on public housing application and related matters.

#### **Scope of Services**

Services provided by the Housing Information Centres are mainly as follows -

##### **(1) Housing Matters**

The Centres answer enquiries concerning the eligibility and application procedures for public rental housing, Home Ownership Scheme (HOS)/Private Sector Participation Scheme (PSPS) Flats, HOS/PSPS Flats in the Secondary Market (SMS) and Home Purchase Loan (HPL). The Centres also provide the following assistance to enquirers who have already applied for public housing through the Waiting List -

- (a) advising them on the latest position regarding their applications;
- (b) assisting those who wish to change their choice of districts in order to shorten the waiting time in completing the procedures involved as soon as possible; and
- (c) assisting those who can produce documents (such as the Eviction Order issued by the Lands Tribunal) proving that they have to vacate their premises shortly, and will, according to the Department’s record, be due for flat allocation within twelve months, in requesting the Department to advance the processing of their applications.

##### **(2) Hardship Cases**

For those enquirers having special difficulties, the Centres can refer their cases to the Social Welfare Department (SWD) for assessing their eligibility for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance and other welfare services. If they are confirmed to be eligible for compassionate



rehousing by the SWD, the Housing Department will allocate public housing units to them.

(3) Other Services

The Centres provide oaths service to the public for matters relating to application for public housing. They also assist the enquirers in seeking free legal advice, or getting a better understanding of the regulations regarding the redevelopment of private buildings and other rent-related matters through the “Rent Officer Scheme”, or advising them on how to apply to the Lands Tribunal for arbitration.

The Centres also provide proactive outreaching service to residents affected by private redevelopment and lodgers of bedspace apartments. The outreaching staff would explain to them the procedures of application for public housing and answer related enquiries.

Besides, an Elderly Information Desk is established in the Centres to provide advisory services to the elderly on matters relating to application for public rental housing, HOS/PSPS Flats, SMS and HPL.

The Centres also provide Fax-on-demand enquiry service. The enquirers, especially the deaf persons, can easily make enquiries to the Centres through fax.

### **Locations and Office Hours**

The locations and office hours of the Housing Information Centres are as follows -

(1) Hong Kong West Housing Information Centre

Address -

G/F, Luen Wah Mansion, 520 Queen's Road West, Hong Kong

Telephone No.: 2816 5044

Fax No.: 2904 9388

Office Hours -

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

(Closed on Sundays and public holidays)

(2) Wan Chai Housing Information Centre

Address -

G/F, 163D Hennessy Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong

Telephone No.: 2587 9121

Fax No.: 2519 8857

Office Hours -

Monday to Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

(Closed on Sundays and public holidays)

(3) Yaumatei Housing Information Centre

Address -

G/F, 446 Nathan Road, Yaumatei, Kowloon

Telephone No.: 2393 9069

Fax No.: 2385 2022

Office Hours -

Monday to Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

(Closed on Sundays and public holidays)

(4) Hung Hom Housing Information Centre

Address -

Shop 4B, G/F, Lok Fu House, 32, Tak Man Street, Whampoa Estate, Hung Hom, Kowloon.

Telephone No.: 2303 0712

Fax No. : 2330 6225

Office Hours -

Monday: 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday to Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

(Closed on Sundays and public holidays)

(5) Sham Shui Po Housing Information Centre

Address -

Shop C, G/F, Man Hoi Mansion, 80-82, Cheung Sha Wan Road,  
Sham Shui Po, Kowloon.

Telephone No.: 2779 4069

Fax No.: 2779 0154

Office Hours -

Monday: 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday to Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

(Closed on Sundays and public holidays)

(6) Tsuen Wan Housing Information Centre

Address -

1/F, Tsuen Wan Station Multi-storey Carpark Building,  
174-208, Castle Peak Road, Tsuen Wan, N.T.

(situated at the Public Enquiry Service Centre, Tsuen Wan District Office)

Telephone No.: 2411 6410

Fax No.: 2492 5284

Office Hours -

Monday to Friday: 8:45 a.m. to 5:15 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

(Closed on Sundays and public holidays)

## **Section B**

### **Estate Management and Rent Policy**

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 1: Domestic Rent Policy**

#### **Characteristics of Domestic Rent**

Domestic rents are inclusive of rates and management fees, and have all along been maintained at a low level because of the provision of premium-free land and capital injections by the Government to the Housing Authority (HA). Rents are based on internal floor area (IFA). Apart from a few exceptions, rents per m<sup>2</sup> IFA are uniform for all the units in the same block irrespective of floor levels and orientation. Currently, the HA's housing stock of over 170 estates provides a broad range of flat types and rent levels for different groups of tenants.

#### **Rent Setting for New Estates**

Rents set for new estates are in the main based on comparable estate value and tenants' affordability.

#### **Comparable Estate Value**

The levels of domestic rents are largely determined by the locations of estates. Factors such as estate facilities, general environment and transportation are also taken into consideration.

#### **Affordability**

To ensure that rents are affordable to the tenants, the HA has adopted the following rent-setting standards -

- (1) the "median rent-income ratio" ("MRIR") not to exceed 15% for the minimum allocation standard of 5.5m<sup>2</sup> per person; and
- (2) the "MRIR" not to exceed 18.5% for the minimum allocation standard of 7m<sup>2</sup> per person.

The "MRIR" itself is only an indicator of affordability to ensure that rents are maintained at a reasonable level. In rent setting, the projected MRIRs at time of intake are normally well below the approved limits. The MRIRs after intake will further diminish as rent remains static until the next review while the rent affordability of the tenants usually improves during the interval as a result of real income growth.

## **The Housing Ordinance**

According to Section 16(1A) of the Housing Ordinance which was put into operation on 13 March 1998, any determination of variation of rent by the HA in respect of any estates for residential purpose shall only take effect at least three years after the preceding rent determination came into effect and the rent determined shall be of such amount that the overall MRIR of all the public housing estates shall not exceed 10%.

Tenants are informed in writing at least four weeks before the revised rents come into effect.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 2: Rent Assistance Scheme**

#### **Aim**

The Rent Assistance Scheme (RAS), which was first introduced on 1 September 1992, aims at granting relief in the form of rent reduction to domestic tenants in public rental housing (PRH) and licensees in interim housing (IH) (excluding traditional temporary housing areas) who are facing temporary financial hardship.

#### **The Current Policy**

The eligibility criteria for the RAS was further relaxed at its last review on 18 September 1996. Under the revised scheme, PRH tenants/IH licensees who satisfy the following criteria may apply for rent assistance -

- (1) the household income meets either one of the following criteria -
  - the household income is below 50% of the Waiting List Income Limit (WLIL); or
  - the rent-to-income ratio (RIR) exceeds 25%; or
  - the household income is between 50% and 60% of the WLIL and RIR exceeds 15%;
- (2) neither the tenant/licensee nor any family member included in the tenancy agreement/ licence may own any domestic or non-domestic property within 24 months prior to the date of application up to the granting of RAS; and
- (3) the family should not be occupying a flat with size exceeding the respective maximum allocation standard.

Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) recipients whose CSSA already includes a rent allowance covering the full amount of rent payable cannot at the same time receive rent assistance. As prospective and redevelopment tenants will be offered new or refurbished flats in the district having regard to their preference and affordability, they may not apply for rent assistance until the next rent review unless their family circumstances have changed after moving in or no suitable cheaper flat can be offered at the time of allocation.

All qualified households are granted one-half rent reduction and their eligibility will be reviewed annually.

### **Move to a Cheaper Accommodation**

Family enjoying the RAS for two years and still facing financial hardship is required to move to a cheaper but self-contained accommodation in the same district. On transfer, the moving family will be entitled to receive a Domestic Removal Allowance and to enjoy a rent-free period of one month. For families who refuse to transfer, they may stayput but the rent assistance will cease.

Elderly households and households with disabled member(s) in receipt of rent assistance are exempted from the requirement to move.



## Section B

### Chapter 3: Housing Subsidy Policy

Since 1 April 1987, the Housing Authority has been implementing the Housing Subsidy Policy (HSP) with the objective of reducing housing subsidy to public housing tenants who are no longer in need of it. Under the HSP, tenants who have been living in public housing for ten years or more are required to declare household income at a biennial cycle. Those who choose not to declare their household income are required to pay double net rent plus rates while those with a household income exceeding the corresponding Subsidy Income Limit (SIL) to pay 1.5 times or double net rent plus rates as appropriate. The SILs are subject to annual review. Those effective from 1 April 2000 are as follows -

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Subsidy Income Limits (per month)</u>	
	<u>Households with income in between the following ranges are required to pay 1.5 times net rent plus rates</u>	<u>Households with income exceeding the following limits are required to pay double net rent plus rates</u>
1 person	\$13,201 - \$19,800	\$19,800
2 persons	\$23,801 - \$35,700	\$35,700
3 persons	\$29,601 - \$44,400	\$44,400
4 persons	\$35,401 - \$53,100	\$53,100
5 persons	\$38,401 - \$57,600	\$57,600
6 persons	\$41,401 - \$62,100	\$62,100
7 persons	\$47,001 - \$70,500	\$70,500
8 persons	\$52,401 - \$78,600	\$78,600
9 persons	\$57,401 - \$86,100	\$86,100
10 persons or more	\$61,401 - \$92,100	\$92,100

However, those households (i) whose members are all aged 60 or above; (ii) with all members receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance; (iii) who are on shared tenancies; (iv) living in blocks which are already announced for redevelopment on or before 31.5.1996; or (v) under non-voluntary transfers with announcement date for vacation on or before 31.5.1996, are exempted from the application of the HSP. Households with special justifications may also apply for exemption on individual merits.

Tenants who are paying double or 1.5 times net rent plus rates may, as appropriate, apply for paying 1.5 times net rent plus rates or normal rent if their household income falls below the corresponding SILs for three consecutive

months. If the drop in household income is of permanent nature due to deletion/death of income-earning members, or because of addition of household members, the household income no longer exceed the prescribed limit, households paying additional rent may apply for immediate payment of lower level of rent.

Double rent paying households which do not own any domestic properties are accorded **second priority** green form status in flat selection without quota restriction in applying for purchase of Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme flats. Households who have been paying 1.5 times net rent plus rates for three years and do not own any domestic properties are also accorded second priority green form status **but with a quota restriction**. For property owners, only ordinary green form status is accorded.

## Section B

### Chapter 4: Policy on Safeguarding Rational Allocation of Public Housing Resources

The Housing Authority endorsed in April 1996 the implementation of the Policy on Safeguarding Rational Allocation of Public Housing Resources (SRA) whereby household income and net asset value are adopted as the two criteria for determining public rental housing (PRH) households' eligibility to continue to receive public housing subsidy. According to the SRA, households paying double net rent plus rates under the Housing Subsidy Policy (HSP) have to declare assets at the next cycle of declaration (two years from the last declaration under the HSP) if they wish to continue to live in PRH.

The asset limits are set with reference to the prices of three-bedroom Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats in the urban area with variations allowed for household sizes. The current asset limits are set at 90 times the 2000/2001 Waiting List Income Limits (WLIL). These limits will be reviewed annually having regard to the price of prevailing HOS flats.

The prescribed Income and Net Asset Limits effective from 1 April 2000 are as follows :

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Income Limits (per month)</u> (3 times 2000/2001 WLIL)	<u>Net Asset Limits</u> (90 times 2000/2001 WLIL)
1 person	\$19,800	*\$ 600,000
2 persons	\$35,700	*\$1,080,000
3 persons	\$44,400	*\$1,340,000
4 persons	\$53,100	\$1,600,000
5 persons	\$57,600	\$1,730,000
6 persons	\$62,100	\$1,870,000
7 persons	\$70,500	\$2,120,000
8 persons	\$78,600	\$2,360,000
9 persons	\$86,100	\$2,590,000
10 persons or more	\$92,100	\$2,770,000

\*The net asset limits for small households at sizes of 1-person, 2-person and 3-person with all members aged over 55 are the same as that of a 4-person household.

On 5 February 1999 the Housing Authority reviewed the SRA and decided that households whose total household income and net asset value both exceed the above prescribed limits, or those who choose not to declare assets are required to vacate their PRH flats.

Households who are required to vacate their PRH flats but have a temporary housing need may apply for a fixed-term licence to stayput in the PRH flat for a period of not more than 12 months, during which licence fee equivalent to market rent will be charged.

During the term of the licence, household not owning any domestic properties are accorded **first priority Green Form status** in flat selection if they apply for purchase of flats under HOS/Private Sector Participation Scheme but for property owners, only ordinary Green Form status is accorded. Besides, he may join the Home Purchase Loan Scheme under Green Form status to purchase a flat in the private sector, or to purchase a flat in the HOS Secondary Market.

During the period of temporary stay, if the household can prove that either the total household income or net asset value has dropped below the prescribed limits for a continuous period of three months, they may apply for reconsideration of grant of tenancy and payment of a rent at lower level. If the drop is of permanent nature, They may apply immediately.

Households with members all aged 60 or above or all are receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance or households on shared tenancies are exempted from income and asset declarations.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 5: A Rent-free Period of 14 Days**

By reference to the average time taken by individual households on preparing for moving to their flats, the Housing Authority has, since 26 April 1993, given all new tenants a rent-free period of 14 days so that decoration can be carried out before the commencement of tenancy. Individual tenants may, however, opt for earlier commencement of tenancy according to their own needs.

For compassionate cases, estate Housing Managers are given the discretion to hand over keys to the tenants concerned more than 14 days in advance on individual merits.

As for Rent Assistance cases, those households who are required to move to a cheaper accommodation after two years' rent assistance will be granted a rent-free period of one month in respect of their new tenancies.

Apart from the 14-day rent-free period in respect of new public rental housing flats, all those who are eligible for Domestic Removal Allowance (including tenants affected by redevelopment/management transfers and clearances of Temporary Housing Areas and Cottage Areas) may also enjoy a rent-free period of one month in respect of their old tenancies. The effective date of such period is determined by the commencement date of the new tenancy. For example, if the new tenancy commences on 16 May 2000, the rent-free period in respect of the old tenancy will be from 16 May 2000 to 15 June 2000.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 6: Deletion/Addition of Family Members**

#### **Deletion of Family Members**

Any family member who wishes to delete his/her own name voluntarily from a public housing tenancy may do so by making a written request. If a family member has not been living in the public housing flat for a long time for no particular reason, a letter will be sent to him/her indicating that because of his/her long absence, his/her name will have to be deleted. If the absentee fails to respond after a reasonable period (normally one month), his/her name will be deleted from the tenancy with the consent of tenant.

To safeguard rational allocation of public housing resources, if the public housing flat becomes under-occupied after deletion of household members, the Housing Department will arrange for transfer of the household to another public housing flat of size suitable for the household. If the household refused the offer without acceptable reason, the Department will serve Notice-to-Quit to terminate the existing tenancy in accordance with Section 19(1)(b) of the Housing Ordinance and recover the flat.

#### **Addition of Family Members**

- (1) Persons who can be added to a tenancy are as follows -
  - (a) tenant's spouse;
  - (b) new-born babies or dependent children under 18 of parents who are authorized occupants, or of one parent who is an authorized occupant and is genuinely alone (the deserted, widow, widower, the spouse of whom is in Mainland China), [however, should he/she be not alone, his/her spouse should be among the categories of persons permitted for addition];
  - (c) dependent parents; and
  - (d) dependent relatives in exceptional circumstances for whom constant care is essential.

The above applies to single-person households, including those living in shared accommodation, as well.

- (2) For the better caring of the public rental housing tenant, the spouse of one of the tenant's married children can be added to the tenancy, provided that the married offspring is an authorized occupant of the flat. The tenant's

other children are expected to move out upon marriage. The second-generation family members thus added will be counted for overcrowding relief. However, they are not, under normal circumstances, permitted to apply under the Waiting List for separate accommodation of their own or allowed to split from the tenancy.

- (3) With effect from 10 September 1998, new application from a whole family of public rental housing households (including single-person households), would not be accepted for registration on the General Waiting List. Families living in Interim Housing will be exempted from this restriction.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 7: Housing Arrangements for Single-Person Households upon Marriage and Family Reunion**

With effect from 21 January 1995, all single-person households living in public rental housing (PRH) and interim housing (IH), including those in shared accommodation, are allowed to add, upon marriage or family reunion, their spouse, dependent children under 18 and dependent parents. If these households wish to acquire larger accommodation after addition, they may apply for overcrowding relief. For those households living in IH, they may register on the General Waiting List (GWL) to apply for allocation of PRH but no credit of waiting time will be given.

However, those households already registered with their family members on the GWL prior to the aforesaid effective date may retain the credit of waiting time (equivalent to their period of residence in PRH/IH up to a maximum of three years) given.

As for those single-person households living in PRH and IH who are presently on or are to be registered on the Single Person Waiting List (SPWL) after 21 January 1995, they can, upon marriage or family reunion, ask for transfer of their applications to the GWL and be given a credit of waiting time equivalent to half of their waiting time on the SPWL up to a maximum of three years.

However, with effect from 10 September 1998, new application from a whole family of PRH households (including single-person households), would not be accepted for registration on the GWL. Families living in IH will be exempted from this restriction.



## Section B

### Chapter 8: Policy on Grant of New Tenancy

The Housing Authority has implemented the Policy on Grant of New Tenancy since 5 February 1999. Upon the death of a tenant, the surviving spouse who is an authorised occupant of the public rental housing (PRH) flat may take over the tenancy unconditionally. Where there is no surviving spouse, the tenancy may be granted to a family member who is an authorized occupant living in the PRH flat. However, this household has to undergo a comprehensive means test covering both income and assets in order to assess the eligibility for grant of a new tenancy and determine the rent payable. Households whose members are all 60 years of age or above; households receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance; households who have joined the Family with Elderly Persons Priority Scheme and Enhancement Scheme for Sitting Tenants and have appointed an elderly as tenant before 5 February 1999; or compassionate and special cases recommended by the Social Welfare Department can be exempted from the comprehensive means test.

The income and asset limits adopted for the comprehensive means test are the same as those used in the Housing Subsidy Policy and the Policy on Safeguarding Rational Allocation of Public Housing Resources.

The following limits took effect from 1 April 2000 and are subject to annual review -

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Income Limits (per month)</u>		<u>Net Assets Limits</u>
	(2 times the 2000/2001 Waiting List Income Limit)	(3 times the 2000/2001 Waiting List Income Limit)	(90 times the 2000/2001 Waiting List Income Limit)
1 person	\$13,200	\$19,800	*\$ 600,000
2 persons	\$23,800	\$35,700	*\$1,080,000
3 persons	\$29,600	\$44,400	*\$1,340,000
4 persons	\$35,400	\$53,100	\$1,600,000
5 persons	\$38,400	\$57,600	\$1,730,000
6 persons	\$41,400	\$62,100	\$1,870,000
7 persons	\$47,000	\$70,500	\$2,120,000
8 persons	\$52,400	\$78,600	\$2,360,000
9 persons	\$57,400	\$86,100	\$2,590,000
10 persons or more	\$61,400	\$92,100	\$2,770,000

\*The net asset limits for 1-person, 2-person and 3-person households with all members aged over 55 are the same as that of a 4-person household, i.e. \$1,600,000.

Households whose income do not exceed two times the Waiting List Income Limits (WLIL) will be granted a new tenancy on normal rent payment. For households whose income is between two and three times the WLIL, they will be allowed to take over the tenancy on 1.5 times rent payment. As regards those who are earning more than three times the WLIL but whose net asset value do not exceed the specified limits, they will be granted a new tenancy on double rent payment. Households acquiring a new tenancy under the Grant of New Tenancy Policy will be required to declare income and assets every two years irrespective of their length of residence in PRH so as to assess their eligibility to continue renting a PRH flat.

For families with income and net asset value both exceeding the prescribed limits or those who choose not to declare household income/assets, they will not be granted a new tenancy and are required to surrender their PRH flats. Those who still have a need to stay temporarily in the PRH flat may apply to stayput for not more than 12 months. During the period of temporary stay, they are required to pay licence fee equivalent to market rent. But, if they do not own any domestic property, they may be accorded first priority Green Form status in flat selection to purchase a flat under Home Ownership Scheme(HOS)/Private Sector Participation Scheme; or ordinary Green Form status if they are property owners. Besides, they may join the Home Purchase Loan Scheme under Green Form status to purchase a flat in the private sector, or to purchase a flat in the HOS Secondary Market.

If an extra-rent payer or licence holder can prove that his/her total household income or net asset value has dropped below the prescribed limits for a continuous period of three months, he/she may apply for reversion to payment of lower rent or reconsideration of grant of new tenancy respectively. If the drop in income or asset value is of permanent nature, they may apply immediately.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 9: Accommodation Arrangements for Divorced Couples**

In view of the complexity of divorce matters, a common sense and flexible approach, taking individual circumstances into consideration, is always adopted by the Housing Department.

In general, the Department does not take active step to secure removal of either party during their separation as this may only create burden to the family in crisis, and exclude the chance of reconciliation.

Tenants are expected to solve their own accommodation problem upon a divorce. No separate flat will be offered to divorced parties. If an agreement cannot be reached by both parties on the public housing tenancy, the Department will generally favour the grant of the tenancy to the party having the custody of children. If each party has the custody of one or two children, or the tenancy consists of other relatives, separate housing units may be allocated in order not to create undue hardship to the family members concerned.

If the legal proceedings involved in the case are expected to be protracted ones and the party with children concerned have genuine and urgent need for separate accommodation in a public housing estate, the Department will, upon recommendation by the Social Welfare Department, provide the party with children with alternative accommodation under the Compassionate Rehousing category on the condition that he/she undertakes to surrender the flat to the Department if he/she is not granted the custody of children subsequently. After the court has decided on the divorce petition and custody of children, if the party without custody of children still retains possession of the flat, the Department will recover the premises upon expiry of the notice-to-quit.

A single party displaced from his/her matrimonial home may, in case of difficulties in finding accommodation, apply to the Housing Department for Interim Housing in the New Territories. He/she may also apply for public rental housing through the Single Person Waiting List and a credit of waiting time equivalent to the length of his/her former tenancy up to a maximum of three years will be granted.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 10 : Surrender of Public Housing Flats upon Acquisition of Another Form of Subsidized Housing**

To address the practical difficulties encountered by the tenants on the one hand and to uphold the principle of discouraging tenants from enjoying double housing benefits for a prolonged period on the other, the Housing Authority revised the policy on 'Surrender of Public Housing Flats upon Acquisition of Another Form of Subsidized Housing' on 9.3.2000. Under the revised policy, tenants/licensees are required to tender notice-to-quit (NTQ) to terminate the original tenancies/licences and surrender the existing public housing unit to the Housing Department within 60 days upon taking up the flat purchased under subsidized home ownership schemes, or upon effecting the assignment of the flat purchased under the Home Purchase Loan Scheme/Secondary Market Scheme, or upon commencement of a new tenancy/licence granted under various transfer or rehousing schemes.

In case of need, households concerned may apply for an extended stay for a maximum period of 30 days, during which they are required to pay an occupation fee equivalent to triple net rent/licence fee plus rates, [or market rent/licence fee or triple net rent/licence fee plus rates, whichever is the higher, if they are market rent/licence fee payers at the time of termination of tenancy/licence].

For equitable reason, tenants affected by redevelopment should observe the above policy as the other public housing tenants.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 11: Issue of Notice to Quit and Appeal Procedures**

A Notice to Quit may be recommended by a Housing Manager if any tenancy irregularity is proved beyond reasonable doubt by detailed checking and investigation, or, if it is considered necessary to recover the public housing unit concerned during the enforcement of management policies. The Notice to Quit is to be issued by a Senior Housing Manager. It is always accompanied by a covering letter stating the reasons for terminating the tenancy and the tenant's right of appeal within the period specified.

Under Section 20(1) of the Housing Ordinance, a tenant has a right of appeal against termination of his tenancy but he must lodge the appeal not later than 15 days from the service of the notice of termination. If the tenant is unable to lodge the appeal personally because of ill-health, absence from Hong Kong, etc., the Appeal Panel may permit the hearing of an appeal lodged by a member of the tenant's family who is an authorized occupant.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 12: Approved Decoration Contractor System**

The Approved Decoration Contractor (ADC) System aims at protecting tenants' interests by preventing infiltration of illegal elements so that decoration works in new estates can be carried out in an orderly manner.

The Housing Department has established a set of eligibility criteria for registration of ADCs on the approved list. Before registration, all the qualified decoration contractors will be checked by the police to confirm that they have not been involved in triad activities.

Licences will be granted to ADCs for undertaking decoration works for public rental housing (PRH) tenants. With a view to providing sufficient ADCs for carrying out decoration services in new estates, the ratio of 1 contractor : 250 households is adopted. The work sequences of all ADCs will be decided by a single ballot and, when the list is about to be exhausted, a second ballot will be conducted.

PRH tenants who wish to decorate their units are free to opt for self-decoration by themselves/their friends and relatives or appoint any of the contractors selected by the Department for that estate. Negotiation of decoration prices is a matter between tenants and contractors. Essential contents of standard decoration contract are printed at the back of each works order which will be signed by both parties once a tenant agrees to place his order.

Upon completion of the decoration works, the Department will collect tenants' views and assess the contractors' performance under a point system. There will also be housing staff specially tasked with handling complaints against ADCs to facilitate prompt follow-up actions.

Furthermore, estate staff will maintain close contact with local police stations during intake of new estates and will request more police patrols in these estates in a bid to curb crime and triad activities.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 13: Clothes-drying Facilities of Estates**

Most public housing units are provided with indoor laundry racks. Linear blocks are even provided with clothes drying cum burglary bars facilities.

Apart from these, “pole-socket” type clothes-drying facilities are also erected on the external walls of most public housing blocks. Tenants may use poles of a length not more than 2m, or install one of the following approved types of clothes-drying facilities at their own expenses -

- aluminium laundry rack with cord pulleys;
- movable drying pole with hooks;
- bamboo pole with a retractable cord;
- semi-circular tube circuits clothes rack;
- rail-type drying rack;
- retractable laundry rack; and
- sliding clothes rack.

The Housing Department gives due consideration to any new design of clothes-drying facilities suggested by manufacturers. If any facilities are proved to be suitable for use by public rental housing tenants, the Department will make recommendation to the tenants so that more choices are available.

To show respect to the elderly, if all members of a household are elderlies aged 60 or above, the Department will provide aluminium laundry racks free of charge for them. Besides, laundry rooms for washing and drying clothes are also provided in Housing for Senior Citizens situated in Small Household Blocks and Ancillary Facilities Blocks.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 14: Security Service and Installations**

Full system of security provisions including self-closing security gates at block entrances and staircase exits; doorphone system; close circuit television (CCTV) inside lifts and at main entrances are installed in all Harmony and Trident blocks of the Housing Authority. Security counter with 24-hour tower guard service is provided at ground floor lobby to control entry into the building and monitor activities inside the lifts. The CCTV is connected to the central control room where guard supervisor and guard are on duty 24 hours daily monitoring the security condition in various blocks and providing necessary support in case of need. Tenants can communicate with the visitors through the doorphone system and observe the condition at the main entrance and inside lifts through their television sets at home.

Regarding rental blocks of other designs, CCTV connected to the central control room are installed in lifts. Tenants can observe the activities in lifts through television sets at home and at the main lobby. Besides, electronic patrol monitoring systems have been installed in these blocks and guards will patrol each floor and the surroundings of the blocks at night. To enhance the security service of these blocks, the Housing Authority has commenced to upgrade the full system of security provisions to them, by phases, starting from April 1999, and the whole upgrading programme will be completed by March 2002.

Though full security system will not be provided in blocks due for redevelopment within 5 years, the security of these blocks has always been a concern of the Housing Department. Indeed, metal gates will be installed at the block entrance and other strategic positions once the blocks have been formally announced for redevelopment and security guards will also be provided after installation of the gates.



## **Section B**

### **Chapter 15: The Use of Roads and Parking Facilities of Public Housing Estates**

#### **Parking Facilities**

Under the Housing Ordinance, the Housing Authority (HA) is empowered to designate certain roads in public housing estates as restricted roads, to provide parking areas, to fix and to collect parking fees. Car parks in public housing estates are provided in accordance with the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines and their provision is reviewed by the Housing Department regularly. Apart from monthly car parks, the HA also provides hourly ones for shoppers and visitors.

Except for estates under Comprehensive Redevelopment Programme and courts/factories managed by Property Management Agents, the privatization scheme in car park management is fully implemented in all HA estates now.

#### **Enforcement Measures against Illegal Parking**

Illegal parking may cause inconvenience to the residents. It may lead to traffic congestion, blocking passages for refuse collection vehicles, fire engines, ambulances, etc., which may impede the saving of lives and properties in case of emergency.

To strengthen the enforcement measure against illegal parking on its properties, the HA started to implement, with effect from 1 June 1994, the Housing Fixed Penalty Ticket (HFPT) System which is similar to that being enforced by the Hong Kong Police Force. Under the system, housing staff are delegated with the power to issue fixed penalty tickets against illegal parking of motor vehicles on restricted roads of HA estates in accordance with the provision set out in Housing (Traffic Contraventions) (Fixed Penalty) Bylaw (Cap. 283 sub. leg.C).

Notwithstanding the implementation of the HFPT System, other enforcement measures such as impounding, towing of offending vehicles on restricted roads, as appropriate, may still be exercised by the housing staff or by the employees of car park operators under delegated authority.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 16: Estate Social Service for the Elderly and Emergency Alarm System**

#### **Estate Social Service for the Elderly**

(1) Purpose

The Housing Authority (HA) has implemented the Estate Social Service for the Elderly Scheme (ESSES) since 1990 with a view to establishing contact with elderly people living alone in public housing estates, identifying their personal needs and the resources required, encouraging their participation in social activities and volunteer work and setting up support networks for them. The scheme is now implemented in 25 estates.

(2) Scope of Work

To implement the ESSES, the HA has established the post of Estate Liaison Officer, who provides the following services -

- (a) to build up and keep record for reference a profile of the elderly in chosen estates;
- (b) to visit living alone elderly people (especially those poor and lonely ones) and to keep watch over their conditions closely;
- (c) to refer personal requests of the elderly to the departments concerned or voluntary agencies for assistance as appropriate;
- (d) to liaise with local organizations such as multi-service centres for the elderly, Mutual Aid Committees, etc., for arrangement of social/recreational functions and community programmes for the elderly; and
- (e) to assist as much as possible in establishing mutual care networks amongst the elderly and to encourage volunteer work by the elderly.

#### **Emergency Alarm System (EAS)**

The HA has installed two types of EAS for elderly tenants living in its public housing estates -

(1) EAS installed in Housing for Senior Citizens (HSC) units

EAS with panic alarm buttons is provided in each HSC unit, which is connected to the wardens' office and their quarters. In case of emergencies, the elderly may press one of these buttons to call the warden

for assistance.

(2) EAS installed in other housing units

Since 1991, the HA has installed the EAS for elderly tenants who are receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and living alone in estates where the ESSES has been introduced. However, as this type of EAS is not connected to a central control centre, its functioning relies heavily on the support of the neighbours and only offers limited assistance to the elderly in distress, the installation of such has therefore been suspended since April 1996.

**Grant for Emergency Alarm System (EAS Grant)**

In May 1996, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) introduced the “Special Grant for Emergency Alarm System” whereby elderly CSSA recipients who have met the eligibility criteria stipulated by the SWD can obtain a special grant, on a reimbursement basis, to acquire any EAS service on the market to meet their needs.

To cater for the need of those elderly who are in need of EAS but do not qualify for, or are not currently receiving CSSA, the HA has, since September 1996, provided them with an EAS Grant to enable them to purchase any EAS on the market to meet their needs. To qualify for the EAS Grant, elderly tenants must meet the following criteria -

- (1) not receiving CSSA;
- (2) living alone or in household with all members aged 60 or above; and
- (3) satisfying one of the following conditions which took effect from 2 March 2000 -
  - (a) if aged 65 or over, having an income and asset not exceeding the prescribed limits detailed below; or
  - (b) if aged 60-64, having an income and asset not exceeding the prescribed limits detailed below and are certified by a public medical officer to be more than 50% disabled or suffering from such medical conditions which could develop life threatening conditions as to require immediate attention (medical certification for those receiving disability allowance from SWD for being 100% disabled or in need of constant attendance is not necessary).

The income and asset limits are based on the prevailing financial eligibility limits for the Normal Old Age Allowance administered by the SWD, which are -

	<u>Monthly Income Limits</u>	<u>Asset Limits</u>
Single Person	\$5,910	\$169,000
Married Couple	\$9,740	\$254,000

The EAS Grant is given to eligible elderly on a reimbursement basis for a one-off installation cost up to a maximum of \$2,500. The Grant is extended to elderly households in interim housing with effect from 2.3.2000.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 17: Services for People with a Disability**

#### **Allocation and Conversion**

In allocation of flats, the Department will consider the case of each disabled person individually and provide him/her with the most appropriate ancillary facilities. To enable disabled persons to use their wheelchairs, the Department will offer them, where possible, flats accessible by lift, widen the doorway or build a ramp. If a flat has to be converted to suit the needs of a person with a disability, the Housing Authority will undertake the full cost incurred. Conversion works include replacement of the asiatic w.c. pan by the pedestal type, installation of grab rails in the bathroom, raising the floor slab of the balcony to make it level with that of the living room, etc.

#### **Transfer**

If conversion of the existing flat is not feasible due to constraints, a disabled person and his family may apply for transfer to a flat in the same or another estate. The Department will consider their applications on individual merits and make appropriate arrangement as far as possible.

#### **Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme**

When families with a disabled member apply for a Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme flat, they may specify on the application form the type of disabilities being suffered by that family member. If the application is successful, they will be accorded a certain degree of priority in flat selection.

#### **Concessionary Parking Fee at Half Rate**

Drivers with a disability living or working in public housing estates may apply to the estate office for a concessionary deduction of 50% on monthly or hourly parking fees.

#### **Flashing-light Doorbells**

The Department will also install flashing-light doorbells for the deaf so that

they may know when they have to answer the door. If necessary, a deaf person may also request his neighbours, through arrangements made by the estate office, to help him in case of fire or emergency.

## **Others**

Provisions to enable free access for people with disabilities have been incorporated in the design for the new public housing estates since February 1998. All public amenities are designed to be as barrier-free as possible.

In established estates, modification works such as provision of ramps for wheel-chair-bounded persons and installation of braille in lift panel for visually impaired persons are being carried out where necessary to facilitate access and mobility for people with disability in the estates.

Blind persons living in public housing estates may request the estate office to keep them informed of any suspension of electricity, water, gas supply, lift service, etc.

If families with members with a disability need other supportive services, such as home help, rehabilitation service, counselling, etc., they may directly or through the assistance of the estate office concerned make enquiries to the Social Welfare Department.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 18: Housing Arrangements for Tenants Affected by Redevelopment**

Households affected by redevelopment may apply for rehousing in new or refurbished public housing flats reserved for that particular phase of redevelopment. Applications for rehousing to other estates will be considered subject to the availability of suitable flats in the estate concerned. They can buy Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme (HOS/PSPS) flats by using Green Forms and are given the first priority in flat selection. From Phase 20A HOS sale exercise onwards, a monthly mortgage subsidy will also be given to assist those non-market-rent-paying households in purchasing HOS/PSPS flats. Starting from June 1999, the affected households may opt to purchase a flat under the Buy-or-Rent Option Scheme and enjoy the monthly mortgage subsidy. Furthermore, households affected by redevelopment are eligible for payment of Domestic Removal Allowance.

Single persons affected by redevelopment are eligible for one of the followings -

- rehousing to a single person flat with priority accorded to elderly and disabled households; or
- rehousing to a unit in the Housing for Senior Citizens if they are able-bodied elderlies aged 60 or above; or
- rehousing to a vacated flat with a living area not more than 19.8m<sup>2</sup>; or
- sharing a flat with another family upon rehousing; or
- payment of a Cash Allowance of \$37,330 for a single person household in lieu of rehousing; or
- applying for purchase of an HOS/PSPS flat under first priority Green Form status in flat selection provided that all eligibility criteria concerned are satisfied, however, their turn for flat selection are placed after the family households.

Two-person households affected by redevelopment are eligible for one of the followings -

- rehousing to a two-person flat with priority accorded to elderly and disabled households; or
- rehousing to a unit in the Housing for Senior Citizens if they are able-bodied elderlies aged 60 or above; or
- rehousing to a vacated flat with a living area of not more than 31m<sup>2</sup>; or
- sharing a flat with another family upon rehousing; or
- payment of a Cash Allowance of \$48,310 for a two-person household in lieu of rehousing; or

- applying for purchase of an HOS/PSPS flat under first priority Green Form status in flat selection provided that all eligibility criteria concerned are satisfied.

Single person and two-person households who opt for cash allowance in lieu of rehousing are also eligible for Domestic Removal Allowance but they will be debarred from further payments of the allowance and allocation of any form of public housing for two years.



## **Section B**

### **Chapter 19: Estate Management Advisory Committee**

Since its implementation on 1 April 1995, the Estate Management Advisory Committee (EMAC) Scheme has been extended to almost all public rental housing estates.

The objective of the scheme is to further devolve the responsibility for estate management to local level, and to enhance communication with tenants on estate management matters. It also aims to increase tenants' participation in, and their understanding of estate management matters, and to strengthen tenants' sense of belonging to and collective responsibility for the well-being of the estate community.

Each EMAC is chaired by the estate Housing Manager whilst membership comprises the chairman or elected representatives from each Mutual Aid Committee in the estate, elected District Council member(s) whose constituency covers the estate and the appointed District Council member from the Area Committee and the chairman or elected representative from commercial tenants' association, if any. Representatives from other Sections/Government Departments and service contractors are to be invited to attend on need basis.

Through periodical meetings, EMAC members can advise the estate Housing Manager on local estate management matters, providing input on priorities of maintenance and improvement works within the estate and proposals relating to security, orderliness and cleanliness, control over roads and car parks, noise problems and amenities in the estate. Besides, EMAC members can involve or participate in the drawing up of estate action plan in respect of estate management and maintenance matters and appraising the performance of contractors who provide services in the estate and their views will be taken into account in contract extensions or renewals.

Funds allocated to the EMACs can be used on local minor improvement works, betterment of building management, environmental improvement as well as estate activities organized with a view to enhancing tenants' understanding of housing policies/services and encouraging tenants' participation in estate management matters.

## **Section B**

### **Chapter 20: Commercial Premises Let by Open Rental Tendering**

#### **Forms of Letting**

- (1) Commercial premises are generally let by open rental tendering.
- (2) The term of tenancy for typical commercial premises is three years while that of large commercial premises is six years.
- (3) All tenders must be completed properly and be submitted under the seal of the tenderer. Tenderers are required to state the tendered rent they are prepared to offer for the tenancy and to enclose with the tender form a cheque or a cashier's order for the tender deposit, which should be equivalent to three months' tendered rent or \$200,000 (whichever is the less) and made payable to the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA). These should be deposited together into the tender collection box specified before the tender closing date.
- (4) After screening, a limited number of tenders will be shortlisted for consideration. Relevant cheques or cashier's orders may be retained and cashed by the HA until a selection of the final tender has been made. Cheques and cashier's orders of unsuccessful tenderers will be returned within two or three weeks after the tender closing date. In the event of withdrawal of a tender, the HA is entitled to forfeit the entire tender deposit or part of it.
- (5) Tender results will be published in the Hong Kong Government Gazette in due course.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

- (1) Tenderers, if in the individual capacity, must be 18 years of age or over.
- (2) If any person who signs as tenderer does so as an agent or a trustee for any other person or persons, he shall disclose in his Form of Tender the names and addresses of such person or persons. If no such disclosure is made, the person signing the Form of Tender shall be deemed to be a principal and no subsequent disclosure of any trust, agencies, etc. will be recognised by the HA.

**Right to Use**

- (1) The commercial premises must be leased and occupied by the tenderers for their own use. No assignment, sub-letting or parting with the possession of the premises or any part of it will be permitted.
- (2) During the term of the tenancy, no conversion to other uses will be allowed.
- (3) Upon termination of the tenancy, the tenant will be required to surrender vacant possession of the premises to the HA unconditionally.

**Section C**  
**Squatter Control**

## **Section C**

### **Chapter 1: Squatter Control**

#### **Responsibilities of the Operations & Redevelopment Division**

The Operations & Redevelopment (O & R) Division of the Housing Department (HD) is responsible for the prevention and control of illegal structures on undeveloped Government land and leased agricultural land by taking the following actions -

- (1) Patrol - to produce deterrent effect;
- (2) Demolition - to clear illegal occupation of Government land; and
- (3) Arrest and Prosecution - to take joint enforcement action with the Police against erection of illegal structures on Government land.

Illegal structures already in existence on or before 1 June 1982 are temporarily tolerated. Demolition action will be taken by the O & R Division against these structures should there be any changes to them in respect of condition, size, use or building materials. Any new structures built thereafter, except those approved by the Lands Department, will be demolished.

The O & R Division is responsible for controlling illegal structures/extensions on -

- unleased and undeveloped land; and
- leased agricultural land.

However, its jurisdiction does not extend to any lands allocated to a Government Department, nor to roads, streets, pavements, lanes, flyovers, rooftops or typhoon shelters.

#### **Legal Powers**

The HD is given statutory powers for the purpose of squatter control under Sections 6(1), 6(2), 6(2A), 6(3), 12(1), 12(2), 12(4) and 13 of the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (Cap. 28) and such powers are delegated to the Squatter Control staff.

## **Section C**

### **Chapter 2: Repair and Rebuilding of Squatter Structures**

Squatters who wish to repair their squatter structures have to make prior application to the relevant Squatter Control Office. Approval of repairs to structures on leased land rests with the Lands Department (Lands D). Housing Department is responsible for authorizing repairs to temporary structures which were already in existence before 1 June 1982 and built of temporary materials.

Repairs to existing structures should not include enlargement, elevation or change from temporary building materials to permanent ones, e.g. replacement of boards and tin sheets with bricks and concrete.

Rebuilding of temporary structures is absolutely banned in the urban area, irrespective of the type of building materials used. Although rebuilding of temporary structures in the New Territories is normally allowed, only temporary materials may be used for rebuilding of squatter structures in the new towns and strict control areas. Use of permanent materials or rebuilding of structures held under a licence on Government land or leased land is subject to the approval of the Lands D.

Rebuilding is not allowed in the situation where surveyed structures are totally destroyed or substantially damaged and that the occupants are permanently evacuated in natural disasters. (Please refer to Chapter 3 of Section D for Rehousing Criteria for Victims of Fire and Natural Disasters).

## **Section C**

### **Chapter 3: Squatter Occupancy Survey**

#### **Squatter Population**

A territory-wide Squatter Occupancy Survey was carried out by the Housing Department (HD) in 1984/85. Persons not registered in the survey will not be eligible for public rental housing in the event of clearance/natural disasters.

#### **Retention of Squatter Occupancy Status**

Registered squatters wishing to move from one squatter area to another have to fulfill the following prescribed conditions -

- (1) the applying family must have been registered in a surveyed domestic structure during the 1984/85 occupancy survey;
- (2) the application is made prior to moving;
- (3) the structure or space vacated by applicant must be surrendered to the HD for demolition or boarding up action;
- (4) the structure to be taken up is not within an area which has been screened for clearance;
- (5) the structure to be taken up must be a surveyed domestic structure and not vacated by people rehoused to public housing or flats purchased under the Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme/Buy or Rent Option Scheme or Home Purchase Loan Scheme;
- (6) move from the New Territories to urban districts or extended urban area is not allowed; and
- (7) the applicant's family must have completed the necessary formalities for inclusion in the Waiting List for public housing.

The above application is free of charge.

## **Section D**

### **Clearance**



## Section D

### Chapter 1: Rehousing Criteria for Squatters Affected by Clearance Exercises

#### Eligibility for Public Rental Housing (PRH)

- (1) Persons must be genuine residents in a domestic structure surveyed on or before 1 June 1982, or a structure held under a licence at the time of the pre-clearance survey;
- (2) persons must be registered in the 1984/85 Squatter Occupancy Survey;
- (3) At least half of the family members (including the applicant) must have lived in Hong Kong for at least seven years\*, all children under the age of 18, regardless of their places of birth, are deemed as having satisfied the seven-year residence rule\* provided that at least one of their parents has lived in Hong Kong for seven years\* ;
  - \* To satisfy the seven-year residence rule, one must have lived in Hong Kong for at least seven years with unconditional stay (except for conditions on the limit of stay).
- (4) they must not, during the period of 24 months prior to the date of pre-clearance survey until the date of intake,
  - own or co-own any domestic property;
  - have entered into any agreement to purchase domestic property; or
  - own more than 50% share in any company which owns domestic property;(Domestic property includes any post-war domestic property; uncompleted private domestic property, uncontrolled or self-occupied pre-war domestic property, roof top structure approved by the Buildings Authority, building lots and Small House Grants); and
- (5) squatters affected by clearance operations announced on or after 11 September 1998 are subject to comprehensive means test, and their total family monthly income and net assets value must not exceed the maximum income and net asset limits laid down by the Housing Authority. The current limits, subject to annual review, are as follows -

#### Income and Asset Limits for Single Persons and Ordinary Families

<u>Family Size</u>	<u>Income Limits (per month)</u>	<u>Net Asset Limits</u>
1 person	\$ 6,600	\$220,000
2 persons	\$11,900	*\$330,000
3 persons	\$14,800	*\$390,000
4 persons	\$17,700	\$470,000
5 persons	\$19,200	\$530,000
6 persons	\$20,700	\$600,000

7 persons	\$23,500	\$660,000
8 persons	\$26,200	\$700,000
9 persons	\$28,700	\$700,000
10 persons or more	\$30,700	\$700,000

(Effective from 1 April 2000)

- \* Asset limits for small nuclear households of two and three persons whose members are all aged 60 or above is the same as that of 4-person households i.e. \$470,000.

#### Income Limits for Unrelated Elderly Persons

<u>No. of Persons</u>	<u>Income Limits (per month)</u>
2 persons	\$14,300
3 persons	\$17,800
4 persons	\$21,200

(Effective from 1 April 2000)

Families failing the comprehensive means test will not be eligible for PRH. Those having a temporary need for housing will be offered Interim Housing but their stay there will be restricted to one year, during which they will be required to pay licence fee equivalent to market value.

#### **Eligibility for Interim Housing (IH)**

- (1) Persons must be genuine residents in a domestic structure surveyed on or before 1 June 1982 but not eligible for public rental housing;
- (2) they must fulfil the "No Domestic Property" criterion as detailed in sub-paragraph (4) under the Eligibility for PRH; and
- (3) for squatters affected by clearance announced on or after 15.4.1999, they must fulfil the criterion as detailed in sub-paragraph (5) under the Eligibility for PRH i.e. their total family monthly income and net assets value must not exceed the prescribed limits laid down by the Housing Authority.

#### **Single Persons**

The Housing Authority revised the policy in September 1999 to allow allocation of individual units in public rental housing to single persons living in squatter structures irrespective of their age, provided that they have satisfied all the eligibility criteria for PRH. If two or more applicants agree to share a unit, a larger unit will be offered to them.

### **Cash Allowance for Single Persons/Two-person Families**

In lieu of rehousing, eligible single persons and two-person families may opt for a cash allowance, the current rates of which may be obtained from any Clearance Unit on request. Such rates may be adjusted without prior notice. Recipients of this allowance are ineligible for further payments of the allowance or for any form of public housing for the subsequent two years.

### **Ex-Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme/Buy or Rent Option Scheme Flat Owners and Ex-Loan/Subsidy Recipients under the Home Purchase Loan Scheme**

Ex-Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme/Buy or Rent Option Scheme flat owners, ex-loan/subsidy recipients under the Home Purchase Loan Scheme, and their spouses, are debarred from rehousing to PRH upon sale of their flats. However, the other family members whose deletion from the relevant records has been approved will not be bound by this restriction.

### **Notes**

Those who are not genuine residents of a clearance area at the time of a pre-clearance survey are not eligible for rehousing.

Where negotiations are taking place with a land owner on the surrender of any private land within a clearance area, the clearerees affected, apart from satisfying the eligibility criteria for PRH and IH as stated above, must produce evidence that at the time of the pre-clearance survey they had been living in the area for a specific period as determined by the Department.

## **Section D**

### **Chapter 2: Rehousing Criteria for Clearnees of Temporary Housing Areas (THAs)/Cottage Areas (CAs)**

#### **Eligibility Criteria for Public Rental Housing (PRH) in respect of Residents of THAs Involved in Clearance Exercises**

- (1) They must be authorized occupants registered with the Housing Department (HD);
- (2) they must be eligible for “Direct Offer Exercise” for PRH <sup>(note)</sup>:  
(<sup>note</sup> Person who are eligible for “Direct Offer Exercise” are -
  - authorized persons in THAs on or before 23 September 1995; or
  - persons who are affected by clearance operations with announcement dates on or before 23 September 1995 but are subsequently rehoused to THAs thereafter. They must prove that they are in continuous residence at the clearance zone before the announcement date of the said clearance operation.)
- (3) they must be in genuine residence at the affected THA units;
- (4) they must not, during the period of 24 months prior to the date of Notice of Clearance served on individual clearnees until the date of intake,
  - own or co-own any domestic property;
  - have entered into any agreement to purchase domestic property; or
  - own more than 50% share in any company which owns domestic property;(Domestic property includes any post-war domestic property; uncompleted private domestic property, uncontrolled or self-occupied pre-war domestic property, roof top structure approved by the Buildings Authority, building lots and Small House Grants); and
- (5) they must not be ex-owners of Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme Flat or ex-Home Purchase Loan recipients.

#### **THA Residents Who Move in after 23 September 1995**

For THA residents who move in after 23 September 1995, i.e. who are not eligible for “Direct Offer Exercise” for PRH, they are required to register on the General Waiting List (GWL). If their GWL applications do not mature at the time of clearance, they will be offered interim housing (IH) units. If their GWL applications mature at the time of clearance, they will be offered PRH units if they can fulfil the prevailing Waiting List eligibility criteria, including the comprehensive means test. If they fail the test, they will be offered IH as they

may still have a temporary housing need. However, their stay in IH will be restricted to one year only, during which they will be required to pay licence fee equivalent to market value.

### **Eligibility Criteria for PRH in respect of Residents of CAs Involved in Clearance Exercises**

- (1) They must be authorized persons under the Occupation Permit issued by the HD or persons covered by the 1985 Occupancy Survey; and
- (2) they must be genuine residents of the affected cottages at the time of announcement of the clearance.

All CA households, except those purchasing or moving to their cottages on or after 11 September 1998, are exempted from the comprehensive means test. For those purchasing or moving to their cottages on or after 11 September 1998, they will be offered PRH units if they can pass the comprehensive means test and fulfil the above eligibility criteria. If they fail the test, they will be offered IH units. However, their stay in IH will be restricted to one year only, during which they will be required to pay licence fee equivalent to market value.

### **Ex-Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme/Buy or Rent Option Scheme Flat Owners and Ex-Loan/Subsidy Recipients under the Home Purchase Loan Scheme**

Ex-Home Ownership Scheme/Private Sector Participation Scheme/Buy or Rent Option Scheme flat owners and ex-loan/subsidy recipients under the Home Purchase Loan Scheme, and their spouses, are debarred from rehousing to public rental housing upon sale of their flats. However, the other family members whose deletion from the relevant records has been approved will not be bound by this restriction.

### **Single Persons**

Single persons cleared from a THA or CA who satisfy the eligibility criteria as stated above will be offered individual units in public rental housing. If two or more single persons are prepared to join in sharing a unit, a larger unit will be allocated.

### **Cash Allowance for Single Persons/Two-person Families**

In lieu of rehousing, eligible single persons and two-person families may opt for a cash allowance, the current rates of which may be obtained from any Clearance Unit on request. Such rates may be adjusted without prior notice. Recipients of this allowance are ineligible for further payments of the allowance or for any form of public housing for the subsequent two years.

## **Section D**

### **Chapter 3: Rehousing Criteria for Victims of Fires and Natural Disasters**

#### **Temporary Shelter or Transit Centre**

In the event of fire and natural disaster in squatter and Temporary Housing Areas (THAs), the staff of the Housing Department will arrive at the scene as soon as possible to register the victims and arrange temporary shelters or transit centres for those in need, pending eventual rehousing in accordance with the prevailing rehousing policy.

#### **Location of Rehousing for Fire Victims from Squatter Areas**

Squatter fire victims who are eligible for public rental housing will be rehoused to public rental flats in the New Territories. For those who do not fall into this category, allocation of Interim Housing in appropriate district will be considered.

#### **Rehousing of Fire Victims from THAs**

Fire victims who are authorized occupants of THAs will be rehoused to permanent rental housing or Interim Housing depending on their eligibility for rehousing.

#### **Victims of Landslips or Natural Disasters**

Authorized occupants of THAs or surveyed squatters affected by landslips or natural disasters will normally be accorded local rehousing, with the proviso that these victims may be allocated housing in the extended urban area (which includes Tsuen Wan, Shatin and Tseung Kwan O) if no urban units are available.

## **Section D**

### **Chapter 4: Eligibility Criteria for Purchase of Home Ownership Scheme(HOS) /Private Sector Participation Scheme (PSPS) /Buy-or-Rent Option Scheme(BRO) Flats and Home Purchase Loan Scheme(HPLS) in respect of Persons Involved in Clearance Programmes**

#### **Eligibility for HOS/PSPS**

Clearees are eligible to apply for HOS/PSPS flats using Green Forms, subject to fulfillment of the eligibility criteria set out below :

##### **( 1 ) Occupants of Squatter Structures**

- (a) The applicant is at least 18 years old;
- (b) the applicant and his family members must be genuine residents of a domestic structure surveyed on or before 1 June 1982;
- (c) application from family must consist of at least two members who are closely related to one another;
- (d) singleton applicant should be unmarried or divorced or whose spouse is deceased or has not been permitted to reside in Hong Kong;
- (e) the applicant must have lived in Hong Kong for at least seven years with unconditional stay (except for conditions on the limit of stay); and
- (f) the applicant and his family members must not in the past 24 months prior to clearance announcement own any domestic property or have entered into any agreement to purchase domestic property.

Applicants who satisfy the eligibility criteria for public rental housing (PRH) as stated in Chapter 1, Section D, will be given second priority Green Form status in flat selection to purchase HOS/PSPS flats. Those who satisfy the eligibility criteria for interim housing (IH) are only eligible to apply for HOS/PSPS flats as ordinary Green Form applicants.

##### **( 2 ) Residents of Temporary Housing Area (THA)**

- (a) The applicant is at least 18 years old;
- (b) the applicant and his family members must be authorised occupants in a THA;
- (c) application from family must consist of at least two members who are closely related to one another; and
- (d) singleton applicant should be unmarried or divorced or whose spouse is deceased or has not been permitted to reside in Hong Kong.



Applicants who satisfy the eligibility criteria for PRH as stated in Chapter 2, Section D, will be given second priority Green Form status to purchase HOS/PSPS flats. THA clearerees who are eligible for IH or have in the past 24 months prior to clearance announcement owned domestic property or have entered into any agreement for the purchase of any domestic property will only be eligible to apply for HOS/PSPS flats as ordinary Green Form applicants.

- (3) Residents of Cottage Area (CA)
- (a) The applicant is at least 18 years old;
  - (b) the applicant and his family members must be authorised occupants in a CA;
  - (c) application from family must consist of at least two members who are closely related to one another; and
  - (d) singleton applicant should be unmarried or divorced or whose spouse is deceased or has not been permitted to reside in Hong Kong.

All CA clearerees confirmed to be eligible for PRH will be given first priority Green Form status to purchase HOS/PSPS flats as well as a monthly mortgage subsidy for six years under the Mortgage Subsidy Scheme.

- (4) Clearerees Failing the Comprehensive Means Test

Clearerees failing the comprehensive means test for PRH or IH are allowed to stay temporarily in IH for one year and are required to pay licence fee at market rent level. During the temporary stay period, second priority Green Form status in flat selection will be granted to them to purchase HOS/PSPS flats provided that they meet the normal eligibility criteria for White Form applicants.

### **Eligibility for BRO**

Clearerees whose PRH eligibility has been established may apply to purchase flats under the BRO. They will also be given a monthly mortgage subsidy for six years under the Mortgage Subsidy Scheme. However, the BRO is only applicable to those clearerees who can fend for themselves if the intake date of the flats so purchased is beyond the clearance date.

### **Eligibility for HPLS**

Families who satisfy the eligibility for HOS/PSPS or BRO can apply for loans or mortgage repayment subsidy under the HPLS in lieu of rehousing.

## **Section D**

### **Chapter 5: Ex-gratia Allowance for Persons Affected by Clearances/Fires/Natural Disasters**

#### **Domestic Removal Allowance/Emergency Relief Fund**

Persons who are involved in clearances, fires or natural disasters and accept rehousing offers/assistance may be eligible for an Ex-gratia Domestic Removal Allowance/Emergency Relief Fund according to family size and type of housing offered. The amount of the allowance/fund is periodically reviewed by the Government.

#### **Shops, Workshops, Schools, Godowns, Pigsties and Poultry Farms**

Business operators conducting a business at the time of the pre-clearance survey in a structure registered for that purpose in the 1982 Squatter Structure Survey may be eligible for an ex-gratia allowance, the amount of which varies according to the type and size of the business involved. However, business operators of structures covered by Short Term Tenancy granted on vacant government land are not eligible for ex-gratia allowance.

#### **Ex-gratia Allowance for Pig and Poultry Farmers**

This allowance is payable to operators of pigsties and poultry farms surveyed on or before 1 June 1982 so as to assist them to re-establish their business elsewhere or change to other fields. The minimum qualifying number of birds of any kind in a poultry farm is 30. However, operators of structures covered by Short Term Tenancy granted on vacant government land are not eligible for ex-gratia allowance.

#### **Ex-gratia Disturbance Allowance for Cultivators**

This allowance is payable to cultivators having continuously cultivated land since 1.6.1982. The aim is to provide them with financial assistance so that they can re-establish their business elsewhere or change to other fields.

#### **Rates**

The rates of the above allowances are revised by the Government from time to time.

**Section E**  
**General Issues**

## **Section E**

### **Chapter 1: Rights and Responsibilities of the Housing Department's Client Groups**

To promote public understanding of its work and enhance service delivery, the Housing Department published in 1996 a document entitled "Knowing Your Rights and Responsibilities". The document, which defines clearly the rights and responsibilities of individual client groups as well as the nature and standards of services rendered by the Department, was updated in 2000. It covers -

#### **(1) Matters concerning applications for Public Rental Housing (PRH)**

Applicants have the right -

- to obtain full information on the application procedures, eligibility criteria, prevailing allocation standards and rental levels;
- to know the progress of their applications and the average waiting time of those recently rehoused; and
- to be given a maximum of three offers of public rental housing in the district of their choice or to be invited to apply for the purchase of a flat under the Buy-or-Rent Option when their turn comes.

Applicants are responsible for -

- providing full and accurate information about themselves and their family members, substantiated by documentary proofs and informing the Department of any subsequent changes as soon as they arise;
- providing timely replies to the Department's letters;
- ensuring that the declarations made are true and correct;
- attending vetting interviews and appointments for other formalities as required punctually;

- completing intake formalities at the estate office according to the appointed time;
- providing acceptable reasons if they do not accept the three housing offers, otherwise the application will be cancelled;
- for those successful applicants of the Buy-or-Rent Option, turning up punctually for flat selection and paying the required down-payment after flat selection and settling the balance of flat price and all other expenses within 14 days from the date of the Department's notification letter.

The services provided by the Department are -

- to make available application forms and relevant information at the Hong Kong Housing Authority Customer Service Centre, Housing Information Centres, Estate Offices and District Offices. Application forms can also be sent by mail to applicants who have provided the Department with a self-addressed and stamped envelope;
- to receive and serve elderly applicants aged over 60 in the Hong Kong Housing Authority Customer Service Centre and Housing Information Centres. Priority rehousing will also be offered to elderly applicants;
- to conduct pre-screening upon receipt of applications. Applications will be put on the Waiting List if they are in order. The Department will interview applicants to vet further their eligibility for public housing when their applications are due for allocation and advise them in writing of the result of the interview. For applicants with physical disability, home interviews can be arranged; and
- to make available recorded information on progress of applications through the Department's 24-hour telephone hotline or fax-on-demand service (Rental Hotline 2712 2712).

The Department's standards of service are -

- to carry out pre-screening on receiving applicants' applications. If applicants are found eligible, the Department will inform them of their application numbers within 14 working days;
- to attend to applicants's enquiries made in person within 15 minutes; and
- to give one week's notice of vetting interview and conduct the interview within 30 minutes of the appointed time if the applicants arrive on time. The Department will advise applicants of their eligibility within two months of the interview if full information is provided.

**(2) Matters concerning PRH tenants**

Tenants have the right -

- to give their views on issues about public housing directly to the Housing Department or to estate staff;
- to help improve the management of their estates by giving their opinions through tenants' organizations, such as Mutual Aid Committees or Estate Management Advisory Committees;
- to comment on the policies of the Housing Authority;
- to complain to the Housing Authority's Complaint Committee if they find any decision of the Housing Department unsatisfactory;
- to appeal to an independent Appeal Panel if their tenancies are terminated by the Housing Department and they feel justifiably aggrieved;
- to apply for the purchase of a flat under the Home Ownership Scheme, or the Home Ownership Secondary Market Scheme, or in the private sector under the Home Purchase Loan Scheme;
- to purchase their flats which they are now living in when they are put up for sale under the Tenants Purchase Scheme;

- to apply for overcrowding relief through an arrangement of transfer or special allocation;
- to apply for a subsidy for the installation of an emergency alarm system if all members in their household are aged 60 or above and are not recipients of the Social Welfare Department's Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, provided that some other prerequisites are also met;
- to apply for a 50% rent reduction, which will be granted for one year subject to review upon expiry, if their household is not a recipient of the Social Welfare Department's Comprehensive Social Security Assistance but is nevertheless eligible for rent reduction under the Housing Department's Rent Assistance Scheme; and
- to terminate their tenancies by giving one calendar month's notice to the Housing Department, with the last day of the calendar month being the date of termination, and to retrieve their rent deposit with their deposit receipt afterwards upon the Housing Department's confirmation that no rent or other fees are in arrears.

Tenants are responsible for -

- To comply with the Tenancy Agreement, namely:
  - \* observing the tenancy agreement and the policies promulgated by the Housing Authority, failing which they may be liable to termination of tenancy;
  - \* paying rent on the first day of each month;
  - \* using the rental flat for residential purposes only, and do not use or let other people to use it for any commercial, immoral or unlawful purposes; using the flat for storage of goods is also not allowed;
  - \* notifying the Estate Office of any changes in the household particulars immediately;

- \* not assigning or subletting the flat or allowing occupation by any unauthorized persons;
  - \* surrendering the flat to the Department if they are no longer living in it, and to move to another more suitable flat if the number of people in the household has fallen below the minimum standard set for their existing flat;
  - \* keeping the environment clean, taking good care of the public facilities, and not causing noise, nuisances, littering and obstruction to the fire escapes; and
  - \* not keeping any animal, bird or livestock inside the flat;
- observing the Housing Ordinance by:
    - \* providing accurate information concerning income, assets, and details about household members as required by the Housing Department;
    - \* declaring their household particulars every two years; and
    - \* complying with the Housing Ordinance and its by-laws, breaching any of them will lead to termination of tenancy, fine or prosecution;
- tendering self Notice-to-quit to the Department at the time of taking over or after completing the assignment of their flats purchased under the Home Ownership Scheme, the Home Purchase Loan Scheme, the Home Ownership Secondary Market Scheme, or the Sandwich Class Housing Scheme of the Housing Society, or any assisted housing scheme administered by the Housing Authority/ Housing Society, or upon allocation of another public housing unit through transfer to terminate their tenancy and surrendering their rental flats to the Department within a specified time. If they need to stayput in their public housing unit beyond the maturity of the notice, they will have to pay an occupation fee for the approved extended period of stay.
- to have all discarded furniture and rubbish removed and all the original fixtures reinstated upon surrender of the flat, failing which, they will be



charged a fee for clearing the rubbish and discarded articles and a fee for reinstating the fixtures, plus an administrative fee; and

- to inform the authorities concerned and the Estate Office immediately in case of emergency.

The services provided by the Department are -

- to handle tenancy matters, tenants' records, and enquiries from tenants at Estate Offices; to provide cleansing, security, maintenance and repair services with the assistance of private companies and contractors; and to provide emergency repair services outside office hours;
- to attend to complaints and requests for repairs made to the Customer Service Assistant at the Estate Office; to discuss with tenants on tenancy and other matters by appointment; and to facilitate the handling of enquiries and complaints through the provision of a telephone hotline (Public Housing Hotline: 2712 2712) and a complaint form;
- to hold meetings with tenant representatives on a bi-monthly basis to discuss matters concerning management and repairs within the estate through the Estate Management Advisory Committee;
- to arrange for Estate Assistants to patrol the estate at regular hours to ensure that building services installations are well-maintained, that the estate is clean and tidy, and that all accesses are unobstructed; and
- to arrange for Housing Officers to visit tenants regularly to verify their reported household particulars.

The Department's standards of service are -

- to attend to enquiries made by tenants at Estate Offices within 10 minutes;
- to encourage payment of rents by autopay or through the Payment By Phone Service, and to handle payment of rent at estate shroff office within 30 minutes;

- to responded to within two weeks after receiving applications for the addition of household members to tenancy records, rent assistance or subsidy for the installation of emergency alarm system;
- to acknowledge receipt of requests for transfer as soon as possible and give initial replies to straightforward cases within seven working days;
- to handle complaints lodged by means of complaint forms within two working days after receipt;
- to handle complaints about cleansing and security services in estates within 24 hours of report; and
- to acknowledge a written complaint lodged with the Estate Office within 10 days and to give a substantive reply within 21 days. Tenants will be kept informed of the progress from time to time for more complicated cases which require more time for handling.

### **(3) Matters concerning repairs**

Tenants have the right -

- to require the Housing Department or the relevant management agent to carry out repairs to the building structure, common areas, building services installations and fixtures for which the Housing Department is responsible;
- to be informed in advance of the Department's planned maintenance works and their schedule of implementation; and
- to be informed of the progress of the relevant works and given an explanation for any delay.

Tenants are responsible for -

- not causing damage to any public facilities, such as fire exit doors and fire hoses. The Housing Department will take appropriate actions against the tenants responsible for any such damages, ranging from having them pay for

the repairs to instituting prosecutions;

- keeping their flats in good condition; maintaining the facilities in their flats properly and paying for the costs of maintenance; using the building services installations and other facilities in the estate correctly, and informing the Estate Office of all damages to public facilities as soon as they are discovered;
- submitting an application to the Estate Office before installing air-conditioners or altering any existing fixtures such as iron gates, windows and window grilles, and, having got the approval, carry out the works according to the prescribed specifications and assuming the responsibility for their maintenance in future;
- not making any alterations to their flats or to any building services installations (e.g. altering the positions of cables, sockets, water pipes, ventilation pipes, etc.) except with the prior written consent of the Department, and reinstating unauthorized alterations at their own cost, and paying for the remedy of any damage or loss arising from any such unauthorized alteration works. All such works must be carried out by qualified personnel and their completion duly certified;
- allowing the Department's staff or agents to enter their flats to carry out inspection and repair works when necessary; and
- the safe use and day-to-day maintenance of the household electrical appliances and gas cooking equipment, and employing qualified personnel for their regular inspection.

The services provided by the Department are -

- to receive requests for repairs to the common area or communal facilities put forward by :
  - \* tenants' calling or visiting the Estate Office during office hours;
  - \* tenants' calling the Estate Office, the Estate Security Control Room, the Housing Department Hotline on 2712 2712 or the Departmental

Communication Centre on 2761 5555 outside office hours on any interruption in water, electricity, or lift services, or any other emergencies; or

- \* tenants' writing to the Estate Office.
- to inspect the reported common areas or facilities within a reasonable time and carry out any necessary repairs. A computerized maintenance information system is being used in all estate offices. Tenants' requests for repairs will be registered and the progress of the works kept track; and
- to carry out planned maintenance on a regular basis to keep the buildings in good condition. This includes inspecting and servicing building services installations, and conducting a systematic condition survey and performing repairs. The Department will inform tenants of any particular works to be carried out under the CARE programme and invite tenants' comments on its various aspects, including items requiring repairs inside their flats.

The Department's standards of service are -

- to commence repairs for which the Housing Department is responsible within two weeks following requests from tenants. Where this cannot be done, the tenants affected will be advised of the reasons for the delay within five working days;
- to handle lift breakdowns as soon as possible after receipt of report. For incidents involving the trapping of passengers, the staff concerned will arrive within 30 minutes. Where no passengers are trapped, staff will arrive within one hour;
- to clear blockage of drainage under the care of the Housing Department within 24 hours after inspection; and
- to attend to reported emergencies and interruption of water or electricity supply promptly:
  - \* for reports received during office hours, within one hour in the case of general emergencies or interruption of water or electricity supply, and

within two hours in the case of interruption of flushing water supply;

- \* within two hours for reports received after office hours and before 11:00 p.m.;
- \* within two hours for reports of emergencies received after 11:00 p.m. Non-emergency reports will be handled the next morning;
- \* within two hours for reports received after 11:00 p.m. concerning interruption of water or electricity supply which affect a large number of households; and
- \* in the case of interruptions of water or electricity supply involving only minor repairs, resumption of supply is guaranteed within 24 hours after inspection.

**(4) Matters concerning application for Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) Flat**

Applicants have the right -

- to obtain full information on the application procedures, eligibility criteria, the HOS flats for sale and the salient points of the Deed of Mutual Covenant;
- to choose a flat according to flat selection priority determined by open ballot; and
- to enjoy the favourable mortgage terms offered by the banking institutions participating in the HOS.

Applicants are Responsible for -

- During the application stage :
  - \* submitting completed application form together with the application fee before the closing date;

- \* attending vetting interview punctually;
  - \* providing full and accurate information about themselves and their family members, substantiated by the prescribed documentary proofs; and
  - \* ensuring that the declarations made are true and correct.
- Upon success in balloting:
    - \* turning up punctually for flat selection;
    - \* paying the balance of the application fee and the required down-payment after flat selection and settling the balance of flat price and all other expenses within 14 days from the date of the notification letter; and
    - \* surrendering their public rental housing units within 60 days after the HOS flats are handed over to them if they are public housing tenants applying by using the Green Form. Any further extension of stay in the rental units is restricted to 30 days.

The services provided by the Department are -

- to make available application forms and relevant information at the Housing Authority Customer Service Centre, Housing Information Centres, Estate Offices, Tin Shui Wai Home Ownership Scheme Show Flats Centre and District Offices. Application forms can also be sent by mail to applicants who provide the Department with a self-addressed and stamped envelope;
- to set up sample flats, block/flat models and display panels, and to make available sales brochures and price lists at the Hong Kong Housing Authority Customer Service Centre and Tin Shui Wai Home Ownership Scheme Show Flats Centre;
- to determine by open ballot the priority for flat selection of successful applicants. The results will be put up at the Hong Kong Housing Authority Customer Service Centre, Housing Information Centres, Estate Offices, Tin Shui Wai Home Ownership Scheme Show Flats Centre and District Offices;

- to show the latest sales position of each HOS project on the computerized display system from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. daily during sales period. Applicants may enquire about their priority number for flat selection, the sales position, vetting interview and flat selection schedule through the 24-hour telephone hotline 2712 8000; and
- to provide applicants with a list of banking institutions and details of mortgage terms and to offer mortgage guarantee for successful purchasers requiring mortgage facilities for a period up to 25 years.

The Department's standards of service are -

- to advise applicants of their application number within 10 days after the closing date of application;
- to give applicants one week's notice prior to the vetting interview and flat selection; and.
- to complete flat selection procedures and assist applicants in completing the formalities for signing the Sales and Purchase Agreement/Nomination Letter within three hours of the appointed time. The Department will hand over the property to the applicants within two days after the settlement of the balance of the flat price.

#### **(5) Matters concerning letting of commercial premises**

Tenderers have the right -

- to obtain full information on the tendering procedures, eligibility criteria and details of the premises on offer;
- to know the terms and conditions of the tender or proposed letting;
- to obtain the latest information of the Department's new shopping centres;
- to know the progress made by the Department in handling their tenders and be notified of the result; and

- to participate in restricted tender and obtain full information on the premises put up for tender from the Department's Redevelopment Section if they are commercial tenants affected by redevelopment.

Tenderers are Responsible for -

- submitting completed tender documents together with the deposit before the close of invitation;
- providing full and accurate information about themselves, their family member(s) and their partner(s)/company, substantiated by documentary proofs where applicable and ensuring that the declarations made are true and accurate; and
- attending the pre-letting interview and completing the signing up formalities punctually.

The services provided by the Department are -

- to make available tender documents and relevant information at the Exhibition Hall of the Commercial Properties Division at Podium Level 1, Hong Kong Housing Authority Customer Service Centre, Wang Tau Hom and at Estate Offices concerned. These documents can also be sent by mail to those tenderers who provide the Department with a stamped and self-addressed envelope;
- to set up an enquiry counter at the Exhibition Hall of the Commercial Properties Division at Podium Level 1, Hong Kong Housing Authority Customer Service Centre, Wang Tau Hom to provide assistance, and to place a tender box inside the Hall to receive completed tender documents during the invitation period;
- to conduct preliminary checks to shortlist all valid tenders received upon the close of invitation and to inform tenderers in writing of the tender result. The Department will invite the successful tenderer to complete signing up formalities and refund the deposit paid by unsuccessful tenderers; and



- to make available details on the leasing of commercial premises through the 24-hour Tender and Marketing hotline 900-0038-7181/2 as well as fax at 2712 2712. Interested parties may also contact the Tender & Marketing Unit at 2711 5137 or 2711 5138 direct during office hours.

The Department's standard of service are -

- to carry out initial vetting of the received tenders and notify tenderers as to the validity of their tenders within two weeks of the closing date of invitation. The Department will give tenderers formal notice of the tender result within four weeks of the closing date of invitation;
- to refund the tender deposit to unsuccessful tenderers within three weeks of the closing date of invitation; and
- to give one week's notice of pre-letting interview.

#### **(6) Matters concerning access to housing information**

Enquirers seeking housing information have the right -

- to cite the Code on Access to Information;
- to know the progress of their requests; and
- to seek a review if they consider that their requests have not been properly handled or have not been reasonably declined; and to complain if they are not satisfied with the reply they received.

Enquirers are responsible for -

- specifying the information required to facilitate information retrieval;
- following the prescribed procedures if their requests are made under the Code on Access to Information; and
- paying the necessary charges for information provided, other than that

available free of charge.

The services provided by the Department are -

- to make available information leaflets on housing policies, and application criteria and procedures at the Housing Authority Headquarters, Housing Information Centres and Estate Offices. The Department is ready to answer telephone or written enquiries from members of the public; and
- to handle requests made under the Code on Access to Information in compliance with the approved guidelines. The Department has assigned a Departmental Access to Information Officer at the Headquarters to coordinate requests made under the Code. A Public Reading Area is also provided in the Library at Block II of the Headquarters for the use of members of the public.

The Department's standards of service are -

- to provide enquirers with the information requested within 10 days of receipt of their request as far as practicable. If it is impossible to do so, the Department will give the enquirers an interim reply, to be followed by a substantive reply within 21 days. In exceptional circumstances, the Department may extend the response time by another 30 days, in which case a full explanation will be given for the time taken.

**(7) Matters concerning access to and correction of personal data**

In relation to their personal data held by the Department, the individuals to whom the personal information relate have the right -

- to know the purposes for which their personal data are collected and the classes of persons to whom the data may be transferred;
- to have access to a copy of their personal data and to request any necessary correction or updating; and

- to complain to the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data if they suspect any breach of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.

The individuals providing personal data to the Department are responsible for -

- providing the Department with full and accurate personal information and documentary evidence to substantiate such information;
- providing the Department with any changes of personal data for updating as soon as they arise;
- giving consent where applicable to have their personal data verified with the relevant data users in the government and the private sector when necessary; and
- paying any fee levied for access to their personal data.

The services provided by the Department are -

- to comply with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance in handling personal data. The Department has designated a Departmental Data Controlling Officer responsible for co-ordinating requests for access to or correction of personal data;
- to collect personal data through lawful means for the purposes related to the Department's functions and activities. The Department will not keep personal data longer than necessary, and will provide appropriate security for the safe keeping of personal data; and
- to provide on request the individuals to whom the information relate with a record of their personal data in the language in which such data are kept. The Department will correct and update the personal data upon request.

The Department's standards of service are -

- to respond to enquirers' written requests for access to personal data and provide data subject concerned or the individual authorized to make the

requests with a copy of such data within 40 days, upon payment of the specified charge. Should the Department fail to do so, an explanation will be given to the enquirers; and

- to respond to written requests for correction of personal data within 40 days.

**(8) Matters concerning dissatisfaction with the Department's services**

If members of the public are dissatisfied with the services provided by the Department, they have the right -

- to lodge a complaint and get a reply;
- to seek a review by a directorate officer of the Department if they are dissatisfied with the reply they received; and
- to appeal to the Housing Authority Complaints Committee if they are dissatisfied with the result of the review.

Complainants are responsible for -

- providing full and accurate information to facilitate the investigation into their complaints; and
- providing their names, addresses and telephone numbers accurately so that the Department can contact them and give them a reply.

The services provided by the Department are -

to deal with complaints made through the following channels:

- complaints made to the Estate Office either in person or by telephone during office hours;
- complaints made by means of a message left through the Housing Department 24-hour automatic telephone enquiry system (Rental Hotline: 2712 2712 and Purchase Hotline: 2712 8000);

- complaints written on pre-printed complaint forms which are available at Estate Offices with postage paid by the Department; and
- complaints made by fax (2624 5685).

The Department's standards of services are -

- to deal with straightforward complaints immediately upon receipt. For cases which cannot be handled immediately, the Department will give the complainant an interim reply within 10 days, and a substantive reply within 21 days. If a substantive reply cannot be given within 21 days, the Department will inform the complainant in writing of the progress and keep him posted on a monthly basis.

## Section E

### Chapter 2: Public Enquiry Service

Over the past years, the Housing Authority has introduced a number of measures to improve its public enquiry service.

Enquiry service is available at counters in estate offices, the Hong Kong Housing Authority Customer Service Centre, the Tin Shui Wai Home Ownership Scheme Show Flats Centre and the Housing Information Centres. Tenants or members of the public can also dial the following numbers to enquire about its services -

#### During Normal Office Hours

- Applications for Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) Flats 2146 1807
- Applications for Home Purchase Loan Scheme 2794 5350
- Sale of HOS Flats in the Secondary Market 2794 5000
- Elderly Priority Scheme 2794 5134
- Commercial Tenant Services 2794 5781
- General Housing Information
  - (Hong Kong West) 2816 5044
  - (Wan Chai) 2587 9121
  - (Yau Ma Tei) 2393 9069
  - (Hung Hom) 2303 0712
  - (Sham Shui Po) 2779 4069
  - (Tsuen Wan) 2411 6410

#### 24-Hour Service

- Housing Department Rental Hotline 2712 2712
- Housing Department Purchase Hotline 2712 8000  
(the above two hotlines are Interactive Voice Processing System for enquiry on general housing policies, information on applying for public housing, home ownership scheme flats, comments and complaints)
- Letting of Commercial Premises 900 0038 7181  
900 0038 7182
- Promotion Activities in Shopping Centres 900 0038 7135
- Estate Housing Manager through an answering machine (telephone number obtainable from the estate office concerned and published in the estate newsletter)