

**Extract from the Administration's response to concerns raised by
the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
at the meeting on 29 October 2001**

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The Liquor Licensing Board and its work

Policy on granting liquor licence to food establishments

12. Under existing policy, the Liquor Licensing Board (LLB) will only consider applications for liquor licence from general/marine/light refreshment restaurants licensed or likely to be licensed (full or provisional) by the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene.

13. The cooked food stalls in Housing Authority estates operate under fixed pitch hawker licences (cooked food and light refreshment) and not restaurant licences issued by the Department. Accordingly, applications from them will not be considered.

Shortening the time for appeals to be heard by the Municipal Service Appeals Board (MSAB)

14. The MSAB Secretariat has advised that it is the MSAB's objective to ensure that appeals lying before it are processed expeditiously within the framework laid down in the MSAB Ordinance. Taking into account the statutory provisions of the appeal procedures and the need to safeguard the interests of parties to a fair appeal hearing (e.g. 28 days for respondent to serve a statement and documents, time for appellant to submit written representations on the respondent's statement, etc.), an appeal will on average be heard in about three months' time.

15. In fact, the waiting time for liquor licence appeals lodged with MSAB has gradually been reduced in the past few years. Most liquor licence appeals are heard between two to two and a half months, with some heard in less than two months.

16. The MSAB will endeavour to further improve the operation of its hearing bearing in mind the objective of providing an open, accessible and efficient avenue for redress.

Shortening the time to notify the applicants of the LLB's decisions

17. Since mid-October 2001, the LLB has arranged to promulgate the results of its open hearings with explanations in brief in the afternoon (3:00 p.m.) of the day of the hearing at the entrance to the building where the hearings are heard. Copies of the hearing results are provided to the applicants or their legal representatives on request. Formal notification of the LLB decisions with detailed reasons for the decisions are issued within 5 to 10 working days.

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