

Review of the Time Frame for the Surrender of Public Rental Housing Flats

PURPOSE

As requested by Members at the LegCo Panel on Housing meeting on 3 January 2000, this paper reports the result of the review of the time frame for the surrender of public rental housing (PRH) flats upon tenants' acquisition of another form of subsidised housing.

THE REVIEW

2. Green Form applicants (mostly PRH tenants or interim housing licensees) under various home ownership schemes are required to surrender their PRH/interim housing units to the Housing Authority after their successful purchase of flats under various subsidised home ownership schemes. Similar arrangement is made for PRH tenants/interim housing licensees having acquired another unit under the flat transfer or re-housing schemes.

3. Taking into consideration the difficulties encountered by some tenants in meeting the requirement to surrender their units within one month, the Housing Authority's Rental Housing Committee endorsed at its meeting on 9 March 2000 the extension of the time frame from one month to 60 days after acquisition of another form of subsidized housing through home ownership, flat transfer or rehousing schemes.

4. Under the revised policy, tenants/licensees will be required to tender Notice-to-quit to terminate the original tenancies/licences within 60 days, upon taking up the purchased flats or commencement of the new tenancies. Any extended stay will be limited to 30 days, with payment of an occupation fee equivalent to triple the normal rent/licence-fee plus rates. For market rent/licence-fee payers, the occupation fee will be equivalent to market rent or triple the normal rent plus rates, whichever is higher. The purpose of introducing a maximum time frame of 90 days is to ensure the timely recovery of PRH flats so that public housing resources could be put to the best use; and to prevent tenants'

prolonged stay in the original flats even after the acquisition of another form of subsidised housing. Application for further extension will normally not be considered except on strong compassionate grounds.

5. The new policy is applicable to Green Form applicants who take over their purchased flats under subsidized home ownership schemes or effect the assignment in the case of Home Purchase Loan Scheme or Home Ownership Scheme Secondary Market Scheme on or after 9 March 2000. It also covers households which acquire a new PRH tenancy or interim housing licence through flat transfer or rehousing on or after the aforesaid date.

6. The revised policy is expected to ease the time pressure of the tenants in surrendering their flats and at the same time uphold the principle of equitable use of public housing resources. Past statistics indicate that 95% of the tenants were able to surrender their PRH flats within two calendar months upon acquiring another form of subsidised housing.^(Note)

Housing Department
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^(Note) Detailed statistics have been provided to Members in February 2000 vide an information paper entitled "Time Frame for the Surrender of Public Housing Flats".