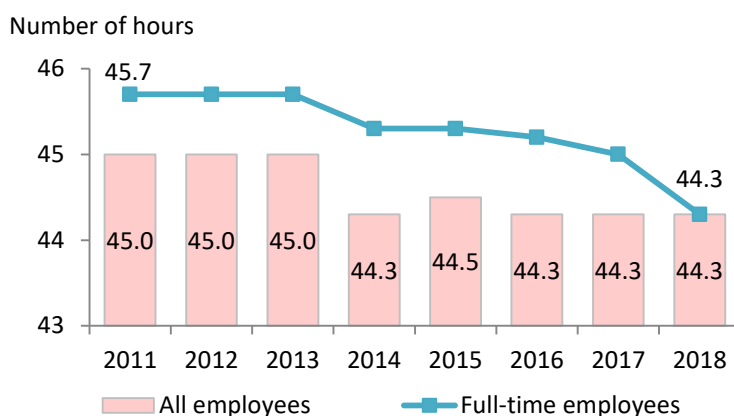


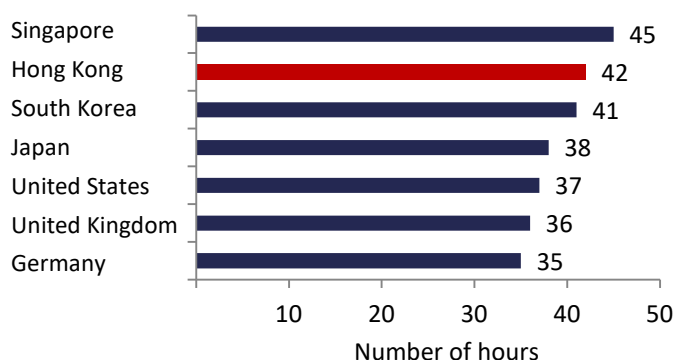
Working hours in Hong Kong

Figure 1 – Median weekly working hours⁽¹⁾ of local employees⁽²⁾, 2011-2018



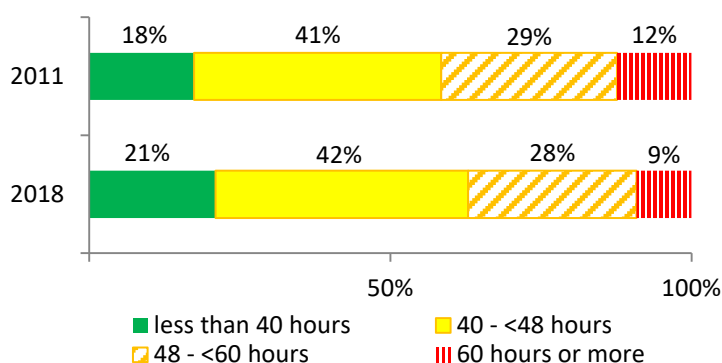
Notes: (1) Including meal breaks but excluding voluntary overtime.
(2) Excluding government employees and foreign domestic helpers.

Figure 2 – Average weekly working hours⁽¹⁾ in selected advanced places in 2018



Note: (1) Measurement of working hours might vary slightly across places.

Figure 3 – Distribution of employees by weekly working hours, 2011 and 2018

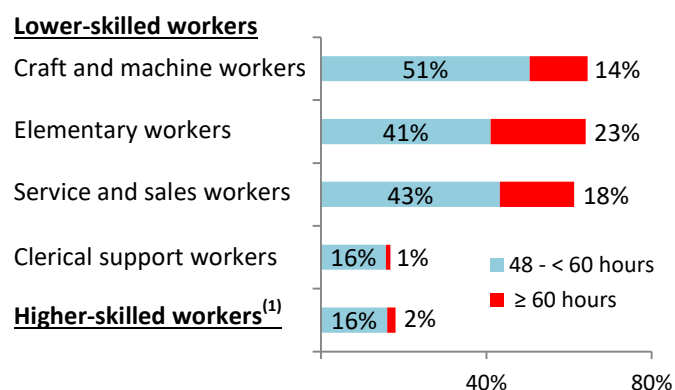


Highlights

- The weekly working hours of employees in Hong Kong have fallen moderately in recent years, along with increasing prevalence of five-day workweek mainly amongst white-collar workers upon promotion by the Government since 2006. Indicative of this development, the median working hours of full-time employees shortened by 84 minutes or 3.1% from 2011 to 44.3 hours per week in 2018 (Figure 1). Including part-time workers, the corresponding decline for all local employees was 42 minutes or 1.6%.
- In spite of this downtrend, local working time is still considered to be on the high side globally. According to the statistics of the International Labour Organization ("ILO") and relevant governments, working hours in Hong Kong averaged at 42 hours per week in 2018, longer than most of the selected advanced places, except Singapore (Figure 2). These selected places offer statutory protection against excessively long working duration to employees, either in the form of (a) **statutory maximum working hours** or (b) **statutory standard working hours** under which higher wage rates must be offered to employees when they work overtime.
- ILO recommends a 40-hour workweek and considers a workweek of over 48 hours "excessive". However, as many as 37% of employees in Hong Kong worked at least 48 hours per week in 2018, yet this already represented an improvement from that of 41% in 2011. For those employees working very long hours (at least 60 hours per week), the proportion fell from 12% to 9% during 2011-2018 (Figure 3).

Working hours in Hong Kong (cont'd)

Figure 4 – Employees working long hours by occupation in 2018



Note: (1) Including managers, professionals and associate professionals.

Figure 5 – Employees working at least 60 hours a week in selected service sectors in 2018

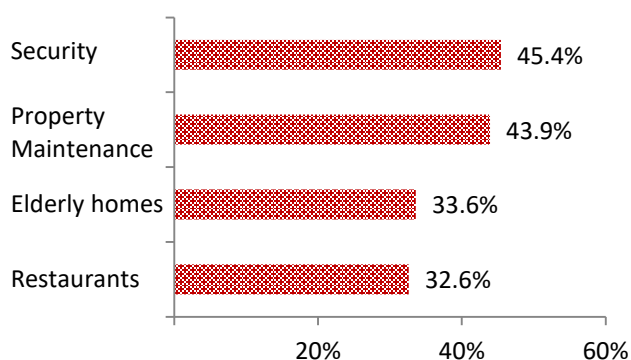


Figure 6 – Working hours and income of selected industries in 2016 and 2018

Industry	Median weekly working hours		Median monthly wage (HK\$)	
	2016	2018	2016	2018
Security	57.0	54.9	11,800	12,800
Elderly homes	54.0	54.0	12,600	13,700
Property maintenance	54.0	54.0	12,400	13,500
Restaurants	54.0	54.0	11,800	13,100
Construction	48.0	48.0	21,200	22,800
Land transport	48.0	48.0	17,500	18,900
Accommodation	48.0	48.0	14,400	15,500
Retail	48.0	48.0	12,400	13,500
Cleaning	48.0	48.0	8,700	9,200

Research Office
Information Services Division
Legislative Council Secretariat
8 November 2019
Tel: 2871 2139

Highlights

- Analysed by major occupation, lower-skilled workers are prone to longer working duration, except white-collar clerks. For instance, as many as 61%-65% of craft and machine workers, elementary workers and service and sale workers worked at least 48 hours a week in 2018. Worse still, 14%-23% of these lower-skilled workers needed to work at least 60 hours a week (**Figure 4**).
- By and large, very long working time manifests in those service sectors still dominated by the mode of six-day working week. For example, 44%-45% of security workers and property maintenance workers worked at least 60 hours a week in 2018. One-third of workforce in elderly homes and restaurants also worked such long hours (**Figure 5**).
- To review the working hours policy, the Government set up the Standard Working Hours Committee ("SWHC") in April 2013. SWHC submitted the final report in January 2017, recommending legislation for (a) compulsory written contracts on normal working hours and (b) higher overtime pay rates for low-income workers. While the Government accepted the recommendations in June 2017 and proposed to apply them to those workers earning up to HK\$11,000, some labour organizations objected because most employees working long hours earned more than the prescribed threshold, and hence, could not be protected by the legislative proposals (**Figure 6**).
- The Government did not proceed further with the legislative proposals in the absence of consensus with the labour organizations. Instead, the Government announced in May 2018 that it would focus on formulating non-binding sector-specific guidelines on working hours for 11 industries by 2020 for employers' reference.

Data sources: Latest figures from Census and Statistics Department, International Labour Organization and Singapore Ministry of Manpower.

Statistical Highlights are compiled for Members and Committees of the Legislative Council. They are not legal or other professional advice and shall not be relied on as such. Statistical Highlights are subject to copyright owned by The Legislative Council Commission (The Commission). The Commission permits accurate reproduction of Statistical Highlights for non-commercial use in a manner not adversely affecting the Legislative Council, provided that acknowledgement is made stating the Research Office of the Legislative Council Secretariat as the source and one copy of the reproduction is sent to the Legislative Council Library. The paper number of this issue of Statistical Highlights is ISSH06/19-20.