

Annex G

Overtime work in Hongkong Post**(1) Typical circumstances giving rise to overtime work in the Postal Services Branch**

- (a) *Local mail processing* : HKP processes some 3 million of mail items daily, over half of which arrive at the Central Mail Centre in the late afternoon following mail collection at street posting boxes and close of business at post offices. Resource planning and deployment is complicated by fluctuations in the daily mail volume (e.g. rising from a typical daily traffic level of 3 million items to 6 million items a day), the mail mix (i.e. the proportion of mail that can be machine-sorted or requires manual sorting) and the actual arrival time of the mail (e.g. whether the mail arrival is spread out or bunched). Due to the need to meet HKP's stringent performance pledges (e.g. 99% of locally posted letters are delivered by the following working day), overtime work is required, particularly during peak periods;
- (b) *Mail delivery* : Last mile delivery relies heavily on the local knowledge of the delivery postmen. An influx of time-sensitive mail in excess of the normal daily handling capacity of a delivery beat cannot be readily shared out and is often handled by the delivery beats concerned by working overtime. Another example concerns mail delivery to newly developed areas until additional delivery beats are formed when the mail delivery volume has built up;
- (c) *International mail processing* : The Air Mail Centre operates round-the-clock throughout the year, processing on average 8 000 to 10 000 bags of mail items daily. On average, HKP uplifts mail to about 160 outbound flights every day for conveyance to destinations around the world. As most of these flights are passenger flights with limited freight capacity, more loading effort is required. Variations in the mix of mail with different delivery standards impact directly on the required manpower resources since the lead time allowed for the despatch of mail items to the designated flights is normally very tight. Any late changes to the schedules of the departing flights or any unforeseen developments at the mail destinations would further add to the work pressure at the Air Mail Centre; and

(d) *Retail business* : Many post offices open from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays and from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. Day-end balancing and mail despatching can only be performed after the close of business. Despite staggering of the duty hours of post office staff, overtime work is still unavoidable, particularly during peak periods. Sometimes, staff are required to stay behind until the security guards have collected the cash received over the counter or the mail vans have collected the mail accepted at the post offices.

(2) Key requirements on administration of overtime work under HKP's departmental control mechanism

- (a) Overtime should only be undertaken when it is strictly unavoidable. "Unavoidable" means that the duties to be performed at the time are essential, the duties must be performed at that time and cannot be deferred, and that the duties concerned cannot be performed by another officer at the time who will not be required to perform overtime. Overtime work is computed based on the applicable workload measurement system, e.g. overtime work for delivery postmen in the Mail Distribution Division is granted for handling the actual delivery workload in excess of the time required for handling the standard workload by reference to a pre-determined workload assessment method. In addition, a superior check system is in place to verify if the overtime work granted is justified;
- (b) Overtime work is subject to approval by officers at Senior Manager level or above, with detailed justifications in the overtime applications. All approvals should be properly documented in the departmental eDuty System;
- (c) When overtime work is of a recurrent nature, a list should be compiled to register the officers who are required to perform overtime work and overtime work should be allocated fairly to these staff on a rotational basis;
- (d) To control the incurrence of overtime and the accumulation of uncompensated overtime hours, the following measures are in place :
- (i) Prior approval must be sought from Assistant Postmaster General (Postal), with full justifications, for exceeding the monthly overtime ceiling of 60 hours when there are exceptional or emergency situations or circumstances of genuine need. All approvals should be documented for future reference/review;

- (ii) The departmental Attendance Management System and e-Duty System have been enhanced with the following features –
- an online list of staff approaching the monthly overtime ceiling of 60 hours is available for access by supervisors and managers; and
 - an auto alert function and a function to stop further allocation of overtime duty to staff who have exceeded the monthly overtime ceiling of 60 hours in the absence of prior approval from the designated directorate officer(s); and
- (iii) Heads of divisions/sections are required to submit a report on approval granted for performing overtime work, together with the actual number of cases exceeding the overtime ceiling of 60 hours for review at least once every two months.

(3) Measures to reduce overtime work in Hongkong Post at source

Examples include :

(a) automation / application of IT solutions

- (i) upgraded the mechanised letter sorting system to enhance the efficiency of sorting of letters to individual delivery beats;
- (ii) developing a Chinese Optical Character Recognition capability to automate the sorting of letters with Chinese addresses;
- (iii) automated counter operations and streamlining back-end operations through the implementation of an Integrated Postal Services System;

(b) process re-engineering

- (i) mail processing
 - re-engineered the operational flow of mail processing at the Central Mail Centre and the Air Mail Centre;
 - rationalised the bulk mail acceptance counter network to advance the arrival of bulk mail at the mail processing centres;

- reduced the despatch frequency for outbound Speedpost and Parcels to Macau;
- (ii) mail delivery
- even out the delivery of bulk economy mail items to optimise the operating window permitted under the service conditions (i.e. delivery within three working day);
 - review the workload of delivery beat postmen and the Speedpost teams on a regular basis with a view to matching the available manpower with the mail delivery volume through appropriate adjustments to the delivery beats;
- (iii) street posting boxes
- ceased mail collection from street posting boxes on designated public holidays and scaling down mail collection on Sundays to dovetail with the mail volume;
- (iv) post offices and P O boxes
- Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office ceased operation on Sundays due to a decline in service demand;
 - adjusted the business hours of 59 low patronage post offices/post offices in close proximity to other main post offices to rationalise service provision of the post office network;
- (c) *load-levelling measures*
- (i) implement load-levelling measures to optimise the utilisation of available manpower, e.g. easing traffic peaks by encouraging mailers to pre-book posting slots at the Central Mail Centre, the Air Mail Centre and the Bulk Air Mail Centre, extending the latest time of posting at the mail processing centres (i.e. 17:00 p.m. at the Central Mail Centre compared to 15:00 p.m. or 16:00 p.m. at other mail acceptance counters) to ease congestion at mail acceptance counters, etc.; and
- (ii) pursue work-sharing with bulk mailers, e.g. pre-sorting by mailers to reduce manual sorting effort after mail acceptance.