

康樂及文化事務署

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

電話 TEL: 2601 8083

圖文傳真 FAX NO: 2697 2120

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來函檔號 YOUR REF:

16 November 2017

Clerk to the Panel on Public Service
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Wendy JAN)

Dear Ms JAN,

Formation of Subcommittee to follow up matters relating to lifeguards of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Thank you for your letters dated 19 October and 3 November 2017, attaching a letter from the Hon HO Kai-ming and two e-mails from the Hong Kong Government Lifeguards General Union on matters about the grade structure review, human resources policies and training for lifeguards of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). Our consolidated reply is as follows:

2. LCSD currently provides lifeguard services at 44 public swimming pools, 38 gazetted beaches and five water sports centres. As at 1 August 2017, there were 2 009 lifeguards comprising 173 senior lifeguards and 1 836 lifeguards in LCSD. Of those 1 836 lifeguards, 740 non-civil service contract (NCSC) seasonal lifeguards were employed on a seasonal basis to augment the lifeguard manpower during the swimming season.

3. As far as civil service lifeguards are concerned, lifeguards and senior lifeguards belong to the Artisan grade and Senior Artisan grade respectively. Lifeguards in the Artisan grade are remunerated at Master Pay Scale (MPS) points 5 to 8 (\$16,065 to \$19,395) whereas those in the Senior Artisan grade are remunerated at MPS points 8 to 10 (\$19,395 to

\$21,880). Their pay scales are the same as other grades requiring similar qualifications under *Qualification Group 6 (Technician, Supervisory and Related Grades) – Group II (Craft and Skill Plus Experience, or Apprenticeship Plus Experience)*. Lifeguards are further deployed to two different streams, namely the beach/swimming pool and water sports centre. The duties of lifeguards are set out at **Annex 1**.

Request for a grade structure review of civil service lifeguards

4. The Government's civil service pay policy is to offer sufficient remuneration to attract, retain and motivate staff of suitable calibre to provide the public with an effective and efficient service; and such remuneration is to be regarded as fair by both civil servants and the public they serve by maintaining broad comparability between civil service and private sector pay. To implement this policy, the Government put in place the Improved Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism (Improved Mechanism) in 2007, under which regular pay surveys are conducted to ascertain whether civil service pay and private sector pay are broadly comparable. With the implementation of the Improved Mechanism and the ensuing civil service pay adjustments, the pay of non-directorate civilian grades can be kept broadly comparable with that of their private sector counterparts. This will enable all or the majority of non-directorate civilian grades to recruit people of suitable calibre and to retain and motivate them. Grade structure reviews will therefore only be considered for individual non-directorate civilian civil service grades under the following circumstances:

- (a) the concerned grades have proven and persistent recruitment and retention difficulties which cannot be resolved through the regular pay surveys under the Improved Mechanism; or
- (b) there are fundamental changes to the job nature, job complexity and level of responsibilities of the grades.

5. There are no recruitment and retention difficulties for civil service lifeguards. Recent recruitment experience has shown that the number of candidates usually far exceeded the number of vacancies and there was adequate supply of suitable candidates to fill the positions. Furthermore, the resignation rate of civil service lifeguards has also been lower than the average civil service resignation rate. Please see **Annex 2** for the relevant figures. Civil service lifeguards therefore do not meet the criterion as set out in paragraph 4(a) above.

6. As for the criterion set out in paragraph 4(b), civil service lifeguards, as all other civil servants, are required to keep their services for the public abreast of ever changing circumstances. Although the workload of lifeguards may have increased in response to the changes in public expectations and social circumstances, etc., there have been no fundamental changes to the job nature, job complexity and level of responsibilities of civil service lifeguards. Civil service lifeguards therefore do not meet the second criterion.

Human resources policies and management practice regarding lifeguards

7. The safety of swimmers and players of water sports centres has always been LCSD's prime concern when considering the manpower requirements of lifeguards. LCSD has from time to time reviewed the lifeguard manpower arrangements for pools, beaches as well as water sports centres, taking into account the actual operational needs. In order to review the lifeguard manpower in a more comprehensive manner, LCSD set up a Working Group on Lifeguard Manpower Review in 2013 to collect views from frontline staff and staff unions concerned. After reviewing the lifeguard manpower in the past five years, an additional \$16 million has been allocated annually in the past five years to create over 190 lifeguard vacancies by phases for employment of NCSC seasonal lifeguards for existing swimming pools and beaches.

8. Where justified, the Government will create additional civil service lifeguard posts in accordance with the established procedures. In fact, the total number of civil service lifeguards has steadily increased by 35% from 893 in 2011 to 1 204 in 2017. The actual numbers of civil service lifeguards between 2011 and 2017 are at **Annex 3**.

9. Apart from increasing the manpower of civil service and seasonal lifeguards, LCSD has implemented a series of measures with a view to increasing the overall supply of lifeguard and relieving the work pressure of existing lifeguards. These measures include the following:

Pay Level

- (a) To maintain the attractiveness of the pay of seasonal lifeguards, LCSD adheres to the principle of keeping the pay of seasonal lifeguards broadly comparable with that of their private sector counterparts. To this end, starting from 2004, reference has been made to the local private employment

market in terms of pay level of lifeguards and other important relevant factors, including the department's fiscal position and Composite Consumer Price Index every year in determining the annual pay adjustment for seasonal lifeguards. The pay review for seasonal lifeguards for the 2018 swimming season has just been completed. LCSD has decided that the pay for seasonal lifeguards will be increased by 4% in the 2018 swimming season in light of the review outcome. The monthly salary of seasonal lifeguards for swimming pools/water sports centres will be adjusted upwards to \$16,060. Besides, LCSD will continue to offer a slightly higher monthly salary to seasonal lifeguards for beaches, so as to attract more qualified persons to work as seasonal lifeguards at beaches and enhance the overall manpower supply of lifeguards. Seasonal lifeguards for beaches in Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun Districts will receive a monthly salary of \$16,760, \$700 more than that of those for swimming pools/water sports centres. Seasonal lifeguards for more remote beaches in Sai Kung, Southern District and the Outlying Islands will receive a monthly salary of \$17,060, \$1,000 more than that of those for swimming pools/water sports centres;

- (b) To continue to adjust upwards the end-of-contract gratuity for qualified seasonal lifeguards in the 2018 swimming season to encourage the former full-time seasonal lifeguards to continue working in the department so as to ensure the steady supply of manpower. To this end, full-time seasonal lifeguards who have served in the department for at least six months in the 2017 swimming season and who have satisfactorily completed one single contract of six months or more in the 2018 swimming season (who have behaved and performed satisfactorily during the contract period) will be offered a 15 % end-of-contract gratuity for the whole contract period. Formerly, seasonal lifeguards on satisfactory completion of the initial three-month contract would be offered a 10 % end-of-contract gratuity and a 15 % end-of-contract gratuity would be payable for lifeguard services starting on the ensuing fourth month;
- (c) To continue offering an additional monthly payment of \$300 to seasonal lifeguards who have obtained a valid first aid certificate and completed a contract of employment for a

specified period in the 2018 swimming season so as to attract holders of a valid first aid certificate to become seasonal lifeguards and encourage seasonal lifeguards to enhance their skills;

- (d) To offer those full-time seasonal lifeguards (available only to those who were hired as full-time seasonal lifeguards after mid-June) with at least two months' service a 10 % end-of-contract gratuity (seasonal lifeguards of swimming pools /water sports centres), or a 12 % end-of-contract gratuity (beach seasonal lifeguards) in the 2017 swimming season so as to attract more young people to make good use of their summer vacation and serve the society as seasonal lifeguards. LCSD will review the continued need for the above measures for the 2018 swimming season in due course.

Enhanced Publicity and Streamlined Procedures

- (e) To streamline the recruitment process and expedite the lifeguard supply chain by inviting full-time seasonal lifeguards to continue to serve on a part-time basis upon completion of their contracts and organising more walk-in recruitments;
- (f) Publicity efforts have been stepped up to promote recruitment exercises for seasonal lifeguards through different channels. For instance, recruitment banners have been displayed at swimming pools/beaches with higher utilisation rates in 18 districts. Recruitment information have been released via the websites of different organisations concerned. Applications are also invited through recruitment advertisements placed in more popular newspapers and social media web sites (e.g. Yahoo, Google, 881903.com, Metro Broadcast Corporation Limited, etc.) as well as on public buses to reach out to a wider spectrum of people. Besides, recruitment pamphlets have also been published and distributed to secondary schools/ tertiary institutions/organisations concerned.

Expanded Recruitment Channels

- (g) To continue to recruit eligible retired civil service lifeguards or retiring civil service lifeguards on pre-

retirement leave under the Post-retirement Service Contract (PRSC) Scheme as seasonal lifeguards;

- (h) To continue to implement the Beach/Swimming Pool Trainee Scheme to provide vocational training to youths aged 16-24 so as to facilitate them to become professional beach/swimming pool lifeguards;
- (i) To continue the beach seasonal lifeguard training programmes integrating training, internship and recruitment;
- (j) To liaise with schools and organisations to explore collaborative effort and encourage them to organise lifesaving training programmes with an aim of increasing lifeguard manpower supply in the long run.

Lifeguard Training

10. LCSD has always attached great importance on lifeguard training and has its own dedicated Training Section to provide suitable training to staff of various grades. LCSD allocates substantial resources to provide civil service lifeguards with a wide array of training opportunities every year in order to help improve their lifesaving skills and professionalism so as to meet the operational needs of the department. The Training Section plans and provides lifeguard training courses of different types, including specific vocational training for lifeguards (e.g. compulsory refresher courses on lifesaving/first aid skills and other skills upgrading programmes), and specific general training courses for staff of all grades (including lifeguards) (e.g. courses on spoken English and customer service skills, occupational safety and health workshop, etc.). At present, vocational training courses provided for lifeguards by LCSD and the relevant accreditation are normally assessed and issued by authorised institutions, which are well recognised both locally and internationally.

11. LCSD has all along been working in co-operation with relevant professional departments and institutions, including the Department of Health, the Hospital Authority, the Auxiliary Medical Service and the Hong Kong Life Saving Society, etc., in designing and providing lifeguard training. Their professional expertise, skills, equipment and recognised status are conducive to the provision of suitable training to the lifeguards. LCSD will build on the well-established and sound foundation to enhance collaboration and communication with the partners to ensure that the contents, design and standards of lifeguard training courses can keep

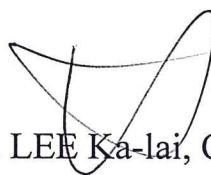
abreast of time. The Training Section of LCSD has been effective in promoting and planning necessary training for lifeguards to meet their actual operational needs. Advice will also be sought from the above professional departments/institutions if necessary to further enhance the training standard. LCSD will continue allocating resources to provide a wide range of vocational and general training opportunities for lifeguards to improve their lifesaving skills and professionalism.

Continued Communication with Staff Members

12. LCSD all along maintains close contact and regular dialogues with government lifeguards and the union representatives through different channels, such as meetings, briefings, open forums, visits and informal gatherings, to exchange views on and promote mutual understanding in management issues about lifeguards. LCSD will continue to communicate closely with the unions and grade members, listen to their views and have meetings with the relevant unions to discuss issues of recent concern in due course.

13. Should you have any queries regarding this letter, please contact the undersigned on 2601 8873 and Ms HO Po-chu on 2601 8045.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms LEE Ka-lai, Carrie)

for Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Major Duties of Lifeguards

Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool)

- (a) Lifesaving duties;
- (b) First aid duties;
- (c) Assisting in law enforcement and maintenance of order;
- (d) Assisting in cleansing work; and
- (e) Winter work duties.

Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) and Artisan (Beach/ Swimming Pool) serving in water sports centres

- (a) Performing lifesaving and first aid duties;
- (b) Assisting in law enforcement and maintenance of order;
- (c) Patrolling water sports activities areas on rescue boat and watching participants carrying out water sports activities;
- (d) Directing participants in getting in and out of crafts and towing/ launching the crafts into water and taking them out of water and back to the water sports centre;
- (e) Assisting in issuing and collection of water sports equipment/gears and assuring that they are in good condition before and after use;
- (f) Cleansing, minor repairs and maintenance of the water sports equipment;
- (g) Assisting in cleansing work; and
- (h) Winter work duties.

Senior Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool)

- (a) Deputising the Amenities Assistant in-charge;
- (b) Supervising Artisans (Beach/Swimming Pool), contract lifeguards and other junior staff in carrying out daily operations and district winter work programmes;
- (c) Directing and performing lifesaving operations and first aid services,

- inspecting lifesaving and first aid equipment and ensuring that they are adequate and serviceable at all times;
- (d) Training of Artisans (Beach/Swimming Pool) and contract lifeguards, and assisting in implementing the departmental drill programmes; and
- (e) Assisting in enforcing the relevant by-laws/regulations.

Senior Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) and Senior Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool) serving in water sports centres

- (a) Supervising Artisans (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre), contract lifeguards and other junior staff;
- (b) Directing and performing lifesaving, rescue of crafts and first aid services;
- (c) Training of Artisans (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) and contract lifeguards in drilling, and implementing the rescue operations;
- (d) Supervising and performing the inspection, issuing, maintenance and minor repairs of water sports equipment;
- (e) Maintaining proper records of water sports equipment, ensuring that they are safe to use and in sea-worthy condition; arranging necessary maintenance and replacement to defected crafts, gears and fittings;
- (f) Arranging necessary training in respect of water sports skills and maintenance of equipment to lifeguards and junior staff;
- (g) Arranging roster and daily duty posts for lifeguards and junior staff;
- (h) Assisting centre instructor to run training courses;
- (i) Conducting and leading the Artisans and Workmen to achieve winter works programmes;
- (j) Performing janitor duty and maintenance of order and law enforcement where applicable;
- (k) Training and supervising Artisans and Workmen in performing general duties; and
- (l) Ensuring the motor rescue boats are handled and kept properly.

**Recruitment and Retention Figures of the Beach/Swimming Pool (B/SP) and
Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre (LGWSC) Streams
of the Artisan and Senior Artisan Grades for the Past Seven Years**

(a) Recruitment¹**(i) B/SP Stream of the Artisan Grade**

Year	Applications received	Offers made and accepted
2016 - 2017	768	79
2015 - 2016		60
2014 - 2015	1 103	46
2013 - 2014		53
2012 - 2013	1 216 ²	147
2011 - 2012		151
2010 - 2011		71

(ii) B/SP Stream of the Senior Artisan Grade

Year	Applications received	Offers made and accepted
2016 - 2017	245	17
2015 - 2016		13
2014 - 2015		11
2013 - 2014	233	10
2012 - 2013		16
2011 - 2012		29
2010 - 2011		-

Note:

¹ No recruitment exercise for LGWSC stream of the Senior Artisan Grade was conducted in the past seven years.

² The recruitment exercise was launched in March 2010.

(iii) LGWSC Stream of the Artisan Grade

Year	Applications received	Offers made and accepted
2016 - 2017	110	7
2015 - 2016		2
2014 - 2015		12
2013 - 2014		2
2012 - 2013	160	1
2011 - 2012		-
2010 - 2011		2

(b) Retention

Rank	Annual figures of resignees						
	2010 - 2011	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017
Artisan (B/SP)	1	2	1	4	1	2	6
Senior Artisan (B/SP)	0	0	13	0	0	0	0
Artisan (Water Sports Centre)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Senior Artisan (Water Sports Centre)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	2	2	4	1	2	6
Percentage to the total establishment of the above rank	0.12%	0.23%	0.20%	0.37%	0.09%	0.17%	0.51%

**Number of Civil Service Lifeguards in
the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in 2011-2017**

Grade	Year*							2011 vs 2017	
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	No.	%
Senior Artisan (Beach/ Swimming Pool)	126	152	163	158	163	161	170	+44	+35%
Senior Artisan (Water Sports Centre)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0
Artisan (Beach/ Swimming Pool)	755	847	947	942	981	979	1 011	+256	+34%
Artisan (Water Sports Centre)	9	8	8	9	19	19	20	+11	+122%
Total	893	1 010	1 121	1 112	1 166	1 162	1 204	+311	+35%

Note

* as at 1 August of each year