

香港特別行政區政府  
保安局



The Government of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
Security Bureau

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30 October 2017

Miss Betty MA  
Clerk to Panel on Security  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Miss MA,

### **Official Visit Arrangements of the Correctional Services Department**

Thank you for your letter of 21 September 2017, requesting this Bureau to respond to the concerns raised by Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT in her letter of 18 September 2017 to the Chairman of the Panel on Security regarding official visit arrangements of the Correctional Services Department (“CSD”). In consultation with the CSD, I am authorised to reply as follows.

Any Member of the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) who needs to visit a person in custody at a correctional institution to perform official duties must make an application to the CSD in advance and confirm that he/she has a genuine need to perform official duties. If an assistant of the LegCo Member intends to accompany him/her on the official visit, the LegCo Member is also required to confirm that there is a genuine need for the assistant to assist him/her in performing official duties. If the application for official visit is approved, the CSD will notify the LegCo Member in writing, clearly stating that the application is approved on the basis of his/her capacity as a LegCo Member, and that the CSD is satisfied that he/she has a genuine need to perform official duties.

Generally speaking, LegCo Members approved for conducting official visits will be arranged by the CSD to visit persons in custody in an official visit room not in the hearing of a CSD officer. Where a Member has to conduct an official visit in the company of his/her assistant to perform official duties, such a visit will be conducted in the sight and hearing of a CSD officer.

Any person who wishes to visit a person in custody not due to the need to perform official duties should conduct a social visit in the capacity of a relative or friend in accordance with the stipulations in Rule 48 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A). Social visits are limited to twice a month and no more than 3 visitors are allowed at one time. Each visit is limited to 30 minutes. The social visit shall be conducted in the presence of a CSD officer.

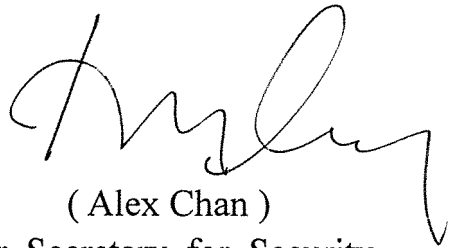
As regards correspondence between persons in custody and persons outside the correctional institutions, generally speaking, due to security considerations, CSD staff may, in accordance with Rule 47A of the Prison Rules, open and search all letters to or from any person in custody for the existence of any article which may pose a threat to any individual's personal safety or to the security, good order and discipline of the correctional institution. CSD staff may also read all letters to or from any person in custody serving a sentence in a maximum security prison. Nevertheless, in accordance with Rule 47C of the Prison Rules, CSD staff shall not open and search any letter by a person in custody to a specified person (including the Chief Executive, LegCo Members, District Council Members, visiting Justices of the Peace etc.) or a letter from a specified person, except under specified arrangements. Such letters to and from specified persons shall not be read under any circumstances.

If a LegCo Member needs to receive letters from persons in custody during an official visit and bring them out of a correctional institution for performing official duties, he/she must make an application to the CSD in advance and confirm that he/she has a genuine need to perform official duties. If the application is approved, he/she may bring the concerned letters out of a correctional institution.

Recently, there has been a noticeable increase in the frequency and duration of official visits conducted by LegCo Members at individual correctional institutions. Consequently, the CSD has to arrange extra manpower to handle the situation, which has inevitably affected the

original work arrangements of frontline staff, the daily operations of the institutions and the routines of persons in custody, such as the requirement for them to perform at least 6 hours of labour in accordance with the Prison Rules, and their participation in activities related to rehabilitation. The CSD will continue to monitor if the situation will persist or improve.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Chan', with a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

( Alex Chan )  
for Secretary for Security

c.c. Commissioner of Correctional Services  
(Attn: Mr WONG Kwok-hing)