

**For information on  
23 August 2021**

**Legislative Council Panel on Public Service**

**Manpower Situation of Lifeguards of  
the Leisure and Cultural Services Department**

**Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the present opening arrangement, recruitment and manpower situation, human resources policies and management practices for the aquatic venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”).

**Background**

2. LCSD currently manages 44 public swimming pools, 42 gazetted beaches and five water sports centres. As at 1 August 2021, a total of 1 764 lifeguards are employed by LCSD. Among these 1 764 lifeguards who provide lifeguard services at the above aquatic venues, 1 467 are on long-term employment (including 182 senior lifeguards), 288 are seasonal lifeguards<sup>1</sup> and nine are full-year full-time lifeguards.

3. As regards civil service lifeguards, 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 (\$17,675 to \$21,340) whereas senior lifeguards in the Senior Artisan grade are remunerated at MPS points 8 to 10 (\$21,340 to \$24,070)<sup>2</sup>. Lifeguards and senior lifeguards are posted to different aquatic venues, including beaches/swimming pools and water sports centres. Their major duties are set out at **Annex 1**.

---

<sup>1</sup> Seasonal lifeguards are short-term staff employed on Non-Civil Services Contract (“NCSC”) terms to augment the lifeguard services at aquatic venues during the peak swimming season.

<sup>2</sup> Pay Scale of 1 April 2021.

4. All lifeguards employed by LCSD shall possess lifeguard awards issued by The Hong Kong Life Saving Society<sup>3</sup> (“HKLSS”). In addition to meeting entry requirements<sup>4</sup>, applicants for civil service lifeguard posts shall pass selection interviews, English and Chinese languages proficiency tests and trade tests conducted by LCSD, as well as other recruitment procedures applicable, including integrity checking and medical examination. Applicants for NCSC seasonal lifeguard posts are also required to meet entry requirements<sup>5</sup> and pass selection interviews, language proficiency tests and trade tests conducted by LCSD. Since seasonal lifeguards are recruited mainly to augment the lifeguard services at aquatic venues during swimming seasons, their entry requirements and assessments are slightly different from those of their civil service counterparts.

### **Opening Arrangement for LCSD Aquatic Venues during the Pandemic**

5. Under the directions of the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (“the Regulation”), leisure pools, children’s pools, toddlers’ pools and Jacuzzis of all swimming pools in Hong Kong are temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the three LCSD swimming pools which are provided with leisure pools only, namely Ho Man Tin Swimming Pool in Kowloon City, Jockey Club Yan Oi Tong Swimming Pool in Tuen Mun and Sheung Shui Swimming Pool in Northern District, have remained temporarily closed as at today since the swimming season started on 1 April this year. Kowloon Tsai Swimming Pool in Kowloon City is also closed for heated pool facilities works. Other than these four swimming pools, facilities such as main pools, secondary pools, training pools and teaching pools in the remaining 40 swimming pools are now open for public use. In addition, according to the restriction on the number of swimmers under the Regulation, at present the numbers of swimmers allowed in public swimming pools shall not exceed 50% of their designed capacity. Given that public swimming pools have yet to resume full service and the number of users is limited to only half of the normal level, the

---

<sup>3</sup> HKLSS is the only body recognised by the International Life Saving Federation for assessing and awarding lifeguard qualifications in Hong Kong.

<sup>4</sup> A valid Beach Lifeguard Award and Pool Lifeguard Award from HKLSS; a valid First Aid Certificate of the St John Ambulance Association, Hong Kong Red Cross, or the Auxiliary Medical Service; a Chinese and English language standard up to Primary Six or equivalent, or equivalent; visual acuity at a minimum of 6/60.

<sup>5</sup> A valid Beach Lifeguard Award and Pool Lifeguard Award from HKLSS; and/or a valid First Aid Certificate of the St John Ambulance Association, Hong Kong Red Cross, or the Auxiliary Medical Service; a Chinese and English language standard up to Primary Six or equivalent.

manpower requirements of lifeguards at LCSD public swimming pools for this swimming season are lower than previous years.

6. Among the 42 existing gazetted beaches, three<sup>6</sup> of them are not open for swimming. Lifeguard services are provided as normal at 18 beaches and suspended at the remaining ones. The public are advised not to swim at beaches without lifeguard services. In spite of that, LCSD has arranged for a small number of lifeguards to provide general first aid services and handle emergencies at these venues. As for water sports centres, all five of them are open for public use as normal.

### **Recruitment and Manpower Situation of Lifeguards**

7. The safety of swimmers and users of water sports centres has all along been LCSD's prime concern when considering the manpower requirements of lifeguards. LCSD has from time to time reviewed the lifeguard manpower arrangements for swimming pools, beaches as well as water sports centres, taking into account the actual operational needs. The department all along provides lifeguard services at aquatic venues through civil service lifeguards/lifeguards on long-term employment and additional seasonal lifeguards recruited during swimming season.

#### *Civil Service Lifeguards*

8. There are no proven and persistent recruitment difficulties for civil service lifeguards. In fact, LCSD has continuously increased the total number of civil service lifeguards during the past decade by almost 60% from 893 in 2011 to 1 411 in 2021. Over the past three financial years between 2018-19 and 2020-21, 196 senior civil service lifeguard/lifeguard posts were created and significantly raised the ratio of beach/swimming pool civil service lifeguards to help ensure the steady supply of lifeguards. The strength of civil service lifeguards between 2011 and 2021 is set out at **Annex 2**.

#### *Seasonal Lifeguards*

9. Enormous challenge was faced by LCSD in the recruitment of seasonal lifeguards this year. As impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, public swimming pools and gazetted beaches under LCSD were closed

---

<sup>6</sup> Hairpin Beach, Rocky Bay Beach and Gemini Beach are not provided with beach facilities such as beach building and shark prevention net, and therefore are not open for swimming.

between December 2020 and March 2021. Due to the full closure, selection interviews and trade tests for seasonal lifeguards in 2021 originally scheduled were not conducted as planned and gravely affected the progress of the recruitment exercises. In addition, people who aspire for a career in lifesaving were unable to undergo lifesaving training and related assessments conducted by LCSD, HKLSS and its affiliated clubs due to the suspension of these activities under the pandemic. The suspension also has a bearing on the revalidation training and assessments conducted every three years for qualified lifeguards with valid lifeguard certificates, resulting in a substantial reduction in the overall supply of lifeguards. Due to its short-term nature, the mobility of seasonal lifeguards is higher compared to their civil service counterparts. The ever-increasing demand for lifeguards resulting from the growing number of private swimming pools in Hong Kong in recent years, coupled with the fact that beaches and water sports centres under LCSD in general are located at remote areas which call for longer commuting time and higher transport fare, bring keen competition for seasonal lifeguards between LCSD and the private sector. On top of that, a great number of job opportunities will be available for lifeguards when Water World Ocean Park opens this year, posing a tight manpower supply of seasonal lifeguards and greater challenges for LCSD in the recruitment this year. Moreover, the readiness of job seekers to apply for the post of seasonal lifeguard is also indirectly affected. Latest recruitment figures are set out in **Annex 3**.

### **Measures to Attract Seasonal Lifeguards**

10. To relieve manpower shortage, LCSD has also recruited part-time hourly-rated seasonal lifeguards and full-time seasonal lifeguards under Post-retirement Service Contract in addition to full-time seasonal lifeguards, and further created NCSC full-year full-time lifeguard posts in 2019. To ensure the steady supply of lifeguards, the department has also implemented a series of measure to further attract eligible people to apply for the post. The relevant measures are at **Annex 4**.

### **Request for a Grade Structure Review of Civil Service Lifeguards**

11. Our 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. It is the Government's policy that grade structure reviews will only be considered for individual non-directorate civilian civil service grades when the following criteria are met:

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

12. Civil service lifeguards and senior lifeguards belong to the Artisan grade and Senior Artisan grade respectively. Recent recruitment experience had shown that as the number of applicants far exceeded the number of vacancies and the supply of suitable candidates to fill the positions was sufficient, there are no recruitment and retention difficulties for the Beach/Swimming Pool ("B/SP") and lifeguards at Water Sports Centre ("LGWSC") streams of the above grades. The resignation rate of the B/SP streams of above Artisan and Senior Artisan grades has also been lower than the overall resignation rate of the civil service. Please see **Annex 5** for the relevant figures. The current recruitment situation of civil service lifeguards, therefore, do not meet the criterion as set out in paragraph 11(a) above.

13. With the launch of policy initiatives, changes in attitudes and expectations of the community, as well as technological advancement, the job nature, job complexity and level of responsibilities of all civil service grades evolve constantly. All grades are required to keep their services for the public abreast of ever-changing circumstances. Artisan(Beach/Swimming Pool) ("Ar(B/SP)") grade, as part of the civil service, is no exception. While these developments may give rise to increase of workload for them, there have been no fundamental changes to its job nature, job complexity and level of responsibilities. Therefore, the grade does not meet the criterion for the grade structure review mentioned in paragraph 11(b) above in the meantime.

14. LCSD will continue monitoring closely the supply of persons with recognised lifesaving qualifications in the human resources market and the recruitment situation of lifeguards, and take follow-up actions in a timely manner. Despite the absence of fundamental changes to the job nature, job

complexity and level of responsibilities of the Ar(B/SP) grade, it was noted that under today's working environment, the work of the grade may put more pressure on the staff when compared with those which require specific skills. It is also probable that the staff are required to observe stricter rules. LCSD is currently assessing the actual circumstances to establish if the conditions are met for submitting an application to the Civil Service Bureau for the grant of job-related allowances to the staff concerned.

## **The Way Forward**

15. LCSD will introduce a series of measures to attract more qualified persons to apply for the post of seasonal lifeguards. These measures include the following:

- (a) To examine the enhancement of remuneration package of seasonal lifeguards with reference to the local private employment market in terms of pay level of lifeguards and other important relevant factors as well as the services and unique operational needs of public swimming pools and beaches with a view to attracting more qualified persons to apply for the post;
- (b) To collaborate closely with HKLSS to provide more lifesaving training programmes and training places to augment the supply of lifeguards;
- (c) To continue launching training programmes for beach and swimming pool seasonal lifeguards so that qualified persons can apply for the post of swimming pool or beach seasonal lifeguard trainees and undergo four-week training and internship. Trainees are eligible for allowance during training and internship. Consideration will also be given to subsidise the lifesaving training programmes enrolled by successful candidates before their appointment; and
- (d) To actively liaise with youth service organisations and schools to publicise recruitment exercises for seasonal lifeguards, and to actively call on students of the Hong Kong Sea School to join the service as seasonal lifeguards.

16. In the long run, LCSD will examine in a holistic approach the utilisation of its aquatic venues and service demand from the public, and explore different services and management practices so as to enhance the

experience with the facilities among members of the public. In the meantime, the functions, roles and work patterns of staff (including lifeguards) at aquatic venues would need to be reviewed, suitably enhanced and augmented to tie in with the optimisation of venues and improvements to venue management. LCSD will communicate with its staff on proposals for enhancing and augmenting the functions, roles and work patterns of the departmental staff in a timely manner.

### **Advice Sought**

17. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

**Leisure and Cultural Services Department  
August 2021**

**Major Duties of Lifeguards in  
the Leisure and Cultural Services Department**

**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)**

- (a) Lifesaving duties;
- (b) First aid duties;
- (c) Assisting in law enforcement and maintenance of order;
- (d) Patrolling water sports activities areas on rescue boat and watching over participants of water sports activities;
- (e) Directing participants to get 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;
- (f) Assisting in issuing and collecting water sports equipment/gear and assuring that they are in good condition before and after use;
- (g) Cleansing and minor repairs and maintenance of water sports equipment;
- (h) Assisting in cleansing work; and
- (i) 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 work 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 laws/by-laws/regulations.

### **Senior Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre)**

- (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) Performing janitor duty and maintenance of order and law enforcement where applicable;
- (j) Ensuring the motor rescue boats are used and kept properly;
- (k) Assisting users of water sports centres to use the crafts properly; and
- (l) Inspecting lifesaving and first aid equipment regularly and ensuring that they are adequate and serviceable at all times.

**Annex 2****Strength of Civil Service Lifeguards of  
the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in 2011-2021**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Year*</b>											<b>2021 vs 2011</b>	
	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Senior Artisan (Beach/ Swimming Pool)	126	152	163	158	163	161	170	173	165	176	177	+51	+40.5%
Senior Artisan (Water Sports Centre)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	5	5	5	+2	+66.7%
Artisan (Beach/ Swimming Pool)	755	847	947	942	981	979	1 011	1 013	1 084	1 174	1 200	+445	+58.9%
Artisan (Water Sports Centre)	9	8	8	9	19	19	20	22	25	27	29	+20	+222.2%
<b>Total</b>	893	1 010	1 121	1 112	1 166	1 162	1 204	1 209	1 279	1 382	1 411	+518	+58.0%

**Note**

\*As at 1 August of each year.

**Recruitment Situation of Seasonal Lifeguards  
(as at 1 August 2021)**

**Recruitment Situation**

Seasonal lifeguards (*Seasonal lifeguards appointed on Non-Civil Service Contract terms*)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Offers made and accepted</b>
2020 - 21	293*
2019 - 20	382
2018 - 19	595
2017 - 18	804
2016 - 17	811

\*As at 1 August 2021, there is a total of 288 seasonal lifeguards, comprising 250 serving seasonal lifeguards on Non-Civil Service Contract terms and 38 on Post-retirement Service Contract terms.

**Measures taken/to be taken by  
the Leisure and Cultural Services Department  
to Address Manpower Shortage of Seasonal Lifeguards**

**Remuneration**

1. The end-of-contract gratuity of qualified seasonal lifeguards has been adjusted upward to encourage people who have formerly worked as full-time seasonal lifeguards to continue working in the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”). For the swimming season this year, full-time seasonal lifeguards who have served in LCSD for at least six months in any one of the swimming seasons in the past three years and who have completed one single contract of six months or more in the swimming season this year (who have behaved and performed satisfactorily during the contract period) is offered a 15% end-of-contract gratuity for the whole contract period. (Other seasonal lifeguards on satisfactory completion of the initial three-month contract are only offered a 10% end-of-contract gratuity and a 15% end-of-contract gratuity payable for lifeguard services starting from the ensuing fourth month).
2. An additional monthly payment of \$300 is offered to seasonal lifeguards who have obtained a valid first aid certificate and completed a contract of employment for a specified period so as to attract holders of a valid first aid certificate to become seasonal lifeguards and encourage seasonal lifeguards to enhance their skills.
3. Since beaches and water sports centres in general are located at remote areas which call for longer commuting time and higher transport fare, not many seasonal lifeguards are willing to work at these venues. To attract more qualified persons, LCSD has further adjusted the monthly salary of seasonal lifeguards posted to beaches/water sports centres. They now receive \$1,000 more per month than seasonal lifeguards working at swimming pools.
4. LCSD would examine the enhancement of remuneration package of seasonal lifeguards with reference to the local private employment market in terms of pay level of lifeguards and other important relevant factors as well as the services and unique operational needs of public swimming pools and beaches with a view to attracting more qualified persons to apply for the post.

## **Manpower Supply of Qualified Lifeguards**

5. LCSD would continue launching the beach seasonal lifeguard training programmes integrating training, internship and recruitment to increase the manpower supply of beach Seasonal lifeguards. The monthly salary of trainees has been increased to \$10,920. Upon successful completion of the programme and internship and after obtaining the Beach Lifeguard Award, trainees would receive direct appointments offered by LCSD to work at beaches as seasonal lifeguards in the swimming season this year. Thirteen beach seasonal lifeguard trainees have already completed their training in May 2021.
6. Revamped training programmes for swimming pool seasonal lifeguards have been launched since 2019 to provide vocational training to persons without any lifesaving qualifications. The programmes provide part-time intensive training and internship of about two months for trainees to obtain the Pool Lifeguard Award and to facilitate them to become professional swimming pool lifeguards. In swimming season this year, LCSD has further enhanced the training arrangements by switching to full-time training for enrolment by eligible applicants. The monthly salary of the trainees has been increased to \$10,500. Fifteen swimming pool seasonal lifeguard trainees have already completed their training in late April 2021.
7. Contract term for serving seasonal lifeguards recruited under Post-retirement Service Contract (PRSC) has been extended to swimming season this year so as to provide a steady supply of manpower. Recruitment of seasonal lifeguards under PRSC for swimming season this year will continue.
8. Collaborations have been made with tertiary institutions/secondary schools, district councils and relevant organisations to launch more lifesaving training programmes (Bronze Medallion). LCSD would continue organising career talks on lifeguards for ethnic minorities to tie in with the efforts of Home Affairs Department, and launch another two lifesaving training programmes (Bronze Medallion) for ethnic minorities in 2021.
9. LCSD has been collaborating closely with the Hong Kong Life Saving Society via the Sports Subvention Scheme and the community sports scheme to provide more lifesaving training programmes and training places to increase the supply of lifeguards.

## **Recruitment Process**

10. Recruitment exercises have been organised, particularly in districts facing a shortage of manpower, with a view to attracting qualified persons to apply for seasonal lifeguard posts on-the-spot.
11. The recruitment process has been streamlined to 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.

## **Administrative Measures**

12. Arrangements have been made for lifeguards at swimming pools/beaches with manpower shortage to perform overtime duties by roster in order to maintain lifeguard services. Their overtime work is compensated in the form of overtime allowance, time-off or extension of contract period.
13. One-year contracts are offered to part-time hourly-rated seasonal lifeguards with a view to attracting a larger number of qualified persons to apply for the post, as well as to ensure the steady supply of manpower all year round in case of emergencies such as collective sick leave action or strike by the lifeguards.

## **Publicity**

14. Publicity efforts have been stepped up to promote recruitment exercises. For instance, recruitment banners have been displayed at swimming pools/beaches with higher utilisation rates in the 18 districts. Recruitment information has been released via the websites of different organisations concerned. Recruitment advertisements have been placed on public transport and in popular newspapers and social media websites to reach out to a wider spectrum of people. Besides, recruitment pamphlets have also been published and distributed to secondary schools/post-secondary institutions/ relevant organisations.
15. Liaison has been actively taken place with youth services organisations and schools to promote lifeguarding as a career among young people and enhance their interest in lifeguard services with a view to augmenting lifeguard manpower supply in the long run.

**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 Eight Years**

**(a) Recruitment Situation**

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

<b>Year</b>	<b>Applications received <sup>(Note 1)</sup></b>	<b>Offers made and accepted</b>
2020 - 21	299	126
2019 - 20	338	114
2018 - 19	488	53
2017 - 18	-	56
2016 - 17	-	79
2015 - 16	768	60
2014 - 15	-	46
2013 - 14	1 103	53

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

<b>Year</b>	<b>Applications received <sup>(Note 1)</sup></b>	<b>Offers made and accepted</b>
2020 - 21	-	14
2019 - 20	-	18
2018 - 19	233	12
2017 - 18	-	17
2016 - 17	-	17
2015 - 16	-	13
2014 - 15	245	11
2013 - 14	-	10

(iii) LGWSC Stream of the Artisan Grade

<b>Year</b>	<b>Applications received</b> <sup>(Note 1)</sup>	<b>Offers made and accepted</b>
2020 - 21	44	3
2019 - 20	48	2
2018 - 19	-	11
2017 - 18	96	5
2016 - 17	-	7
2015 - 16	-	2
2014 - 15	-	12
2013 - 14	110	2

(iv) LGWSC Stream of the Senior Artisan Grade

<b>Year</b>	<b>Applications received</b> <sup>(Note 1)</sup>	<b>Offers made and accepted</b>
2020 - 21	-	-
2019 - 20	-	1
2018 - 19	59	4

**Note:**

1. “Applications received” refers to the total number of applications received after the launch of the recruitment exercise in that year. Upon completion of the recruitment exercise, LCSD offered appointment to suitable candidates based on the vacancy situation in the same or subsequent year until a new round of recruitment exercise was launched.

(b) **Retention**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Annual figures of resignees</b>				
	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
Artisan(B/SP)	6	5	5	3	4
Senior Artisan (B/SP)	0	0	1	0	0
Artisan (Water Sports Centre)	0	0	0	0	0
Senior Artisan (Water Sports Centre)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	6	5	6	3	4
<b>Percentage to the total establishment of the above grades(%)</b>	0.51	0.41	0.49	0.24	0.30