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Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Meeting on 24 April 2025

**Information note on regulation of life-saving attendants at
private swimming pools**

According to the Swimming Pools Regulation ([Cap. 132CA](#)), any artificially constructed pool used for swimming or bathing and to which the public have access (whether on payment or otherwise) or which is operated by any club, institution, association or other organization is required to obtain a swimming pool licence from the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene. Application for a swimming pool licence is not required for those which serve not more than 20 residential units and to which the public have no access. To protect swimmers' safety and maintain environmental hygiene, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") has formulated [licensing requirements and conditions](#) concerning different aspects such as plans, sanitary fitments and alarm bell systems. **Main licensing requirements and conditions relevant to life-saving attendants** include:

- (a) The licensee shall ensure that **sufficient number of life-saving attendants are on duty** at the swimming pool;
- (b) The licensee shall keep **proper records** of the names, Pool Lifeguard Award ("PLA") numbers and duty hours of the life-saving attendants on duty at the swimming pool each day. The relevant records shall be **retained for at least 90 days** and readily available for inspection on demand by the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene or his/her representative; and
- (c) the licensee shall **display in a conspicuous place** at the pool entrance the number of life-saving attendants who shall be on duty during the opening hours of the swimming pool, as well as recent photographs, names and PLA numbers of the life-saving attendants on duty.

2. As for the number of life-saving attendants on duty, in general, the licensee of a swimming pool shall, at all times during which the pool is open to swimmers, **deploy not less than two life-saving attendants** possessing valid certificates of competency in life saving and first aid, unless variation is approved by FEHD. When processing applications for a swimming pool licence, FEHD will also make specific requirements for the number of life-saving attendants having regard to the actual situation of the swimming pool, such as the number of and size of the swimming pool. A breakdown of the number of life-saving attendants required to be on duty during the opening hours of licensed private swimming pools (“licensed swimming pools”) as at 30 April 2023 is set out in the table below:

Number of qualified life-saving attendants required to be on duty under licensing conditions	Number of private swimming pools required to meet relevant licensing conditions
Not less than 1 ¹	217
Not less than 2	1 028
Not less than 3	31
Not less than 4	79
Not less than 5	15
Not less than 6	11
Not less than 7	3
8 or above	4
Total (as at 30 April 2023)	1 388

Source: [*The Administration’s reply to a written question on “Protecting the safety of swimmers in private swimming pools” at the Council meeting of 21 June 2023*](#)

3. A number of Members had, through various media,² expressed concerns and views on the **problem of insufficient supply of life-saving attendants in the labour market**, including how the **supply of services at**

¹ If individual swimming pools meet specific criteria (e.g. a small pool size) and have obtained FEHD’s approval for variation of their licensing conditions, they may arrange not less than one qualified life-saving attendant to be on duty during the opening hours of the swimming pool.

² Please refer to the articles (Chinese version only) entitled [“救生員短缺 | 康文署：外判迫不得已 議員：慘烈、政府「鴛鴦」”](#) on HK01 dated 29 April 2024 and [“龍七公：救生員不足泳池泳灘「門常關」”](#) on Oriental Daily dated 23 July 2024.

licensed swimming pools was affected by such situation and the possible **safety hazards** arising therefrom. Some Members pointed out that although the Hong Kong China Life Saving Society (“HKCLSS”) had issued a considerable number of PLAs,³ both licensed swimming pools and public swimming pools under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”)⁴ were still facing the manpower shortage of life-saving attendants, which might be related to their **remuneration packages**. According to the findings of the relevant pay survey conducted by LCSD in **September 2022**, the **average monthly salary** of life-saving attendants in the **private market** was **about \$22,500**. As for **life-saving attendants employed by LCSD**, the relevant posts currently under recruitment and their **remunerations** are summarized as follows: (a) civil service life-saving attendant: \$19,535 to \$23,585 per month; (b) seasonal life-saving attendant: \$22,100 to \$23,100 per month; and (c) contract full-year life-saving attendant: \$22,400 to \$23,500.

4. Apart from the issue of supply of life-saving attendants, there were media reports in November 2024 that **employment of unqualified life-saving attendants was common in private swimming pools**.⁵ To step up efforts to prevent and combat such violations, FEHD advised that the following measures would be adopted:⁶

- (a) Explicitly requiring licensees to **verify identity documents, PLA and personal logbooks** before employing a life-saving attendants, and to properly keep a copy of the documents;
- (b) Coordinating with HKCLSS to **confirm the validity of PLAs** to ensure the life-saving attendants on duty possess valid qualifications;
- (c) **Stepping up inspections**, including checking the identity documents of each life-saving attendant on duty to verify their identity during monthly surprise inspections;

³ Life-saving attendants on duty at licensed swimming pools are required to possess PLAs issued by HKCLSS. According to its website, [HKCLSS](#) issued a total of 3 561 PLAs in 2023-2024 (including the newly issued ones and those issued to existing holders who have passed the revalidation examination).

⁴ At present, there are around 1 400 licensed swimming pools and 46 public swimming pool complexes across the territory.

⁵ Please refer to the article (Chinese version only) entitled [“無牌救生員 | 業界人士爆料：私人泳池嚴重一個泳池 5 人均持假牌”](#) on HK01 dated 3 November 2024.

⁶ Please refer to the [press release](#) issued by the Administration on 6 March 2025 for details.

- (d) Flexibly deploying FEHD's manpower during swimming seasons to analyze complaint cases, so as to **draw up a target list** to which inspections will be stepped up during July and August to specifically focus on life-saving attendant qualifications;
- (e) **Taking immediate follow-up actions** against swimming pools without sufficient qualified life-saving attendants on duty (if any), including requiring the licensee to immediately close the swimming pool and **issuing a warning** or even **instituting prosecution** against licensees, and considering **cancelling** the licences of swimming pools with repeated contraventions (if any);
- (f) **Reporting to the Police** anyone involved in the use of false documents or other persons' documents (if any); and
- (g) Working jointly with the Property Management Services Authority to (i) **establish a communication mechanism** in respect of violation cases for both parties to take follow-up actions, according to their respective authorities, against licensees and property management companies; and (ii) **step up publicity and educational work**.