

**Twenty-seventh Meeting of
the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee**

***Agenda Item 5(c) : Report on the work of the
Task Force on Business Liaison Groups***

Purpose

This paper reports on the work of the Task Force on Business Liaison Groups (BLGTF) since the last Business Facilitation Advisory Committee meeting on 23 July 2014.

Work progress of the BLGTF

Overall progress of Business Liaison Groups

2. From 1 June to 13 October 2014, four Business Liaison Group (BLG) meetings were held. At these meetings, a total of 11 issues raised by the trades were satisfactorily resolved or clarified. Besides, two information dissemination sessions on new business facilitation measures and two consultation sessions on proposed new regulation were conducted by the departments concerned.

Report of no addition and alteration works for renewal of Places of Public Entertainment Licence

3. Renewal of Places of Public Entertainment Licence (PPEL) requires, inter alia, that if no addition or alteration works of certain types have been conducted in the licence premises since the last licence renewal date, the applicant concerned has to confirm such circumstances on a standard declaration form to the Fire Service Department (FSD).

4. At a BLG meeting for family amusement centres, the trade raised the concern that in a PPEL renewal application, FSD had requested the applicant to complete the declaration form no matter whether any type of addition or alteration works listed on the form had been conducted or not at their premises since the last licence renewal date. In response, FSD has clarified the purpose of the declaration form, which intends to help FSD staff quickly identify the existence of addition or alteration works that have fire-safety implications

during premises inspection. To avoid the trade's confusion as to when and how the declaration form should be completed, FSD will add guidance notes to the form.

5. BLGTF appreciates the efforts of FSD to facilitate the trade.

Amendment to the Police visit summary form for licence renewal application

6. The Hong Kong Police Force (Police) is duty bound to take proactive enforcement actions to ensure that liquor licensed premises are operated in accordance with the relevant legislations and licensing conditions. Police also reports to the Liquor Licensing Board (LLB) any irregularities detected on liquor licensed premises for its consideration of the renewal and other applications of the premises.

7. At a BLG meeting for karaoke establishments, nightclubs, bars and other entertainment clubs, the trade suggested to include information of the reportee of each incident (i.e. whether the report was made by the licensee or the person-in-charge of the premises) in the visit summary of Police so that LLB would have a clearer picture of whether the premises were properly managed or not. In a recent regular review of the format of the visit summary, Police has, amongst other amendments, included additional information regarding the identity of the reporteers of the incidents.

8. BLGTF welcomes the improvement efforts of Police.

Fast track application procedure for events/activities not specified in the Places of Amusement Licence

9. To facilitate the trade of billiard establishments, public bowling-alleys and public skating rinks to develop more business opportunities, LCSD allows the trade to apply for permission to hold events/activities not specified in the licence. It normally takes about 30 working days to process such application.

10. At a BLG meeting for billiard establishments, public bowling-alleys and public skating rinks, the trade enquired whether the time of processing an application for non-designated use of places of amusement could be shortened. In response, LCSD has, with the collaboration of relevant departments, implemented a fast track application procedure for processing simple cases meeting certain criteria with effect from 1 April 2014. The processing time of the applications can be shortened by 33% to 20 working days.

11. BLGTF appreciates the business facilitation measure of LCSD.

Same exhaust outlet for the ventilating systems of the kitchen and bar area of restaurants

12. Section 8 of the Ventilation of Scheduled Premises Regulation (Cap.132CE) stipulates that the ventilating system provided for the kitchens shall be independent of any ventilating system provided for the public parts of the premises. Section 4 of the Regulation also requires that every duct shall, among others, where it passes through any floor, wall or ceiling, be fitted with a damper which shall be operated by fusible links of a type approved by the Director of Fire Services.

13. At a BLG meeting for restaurants, the trade expressed the concern that due to physical site restriction, it might not be feasible to provide separate exhaust outlets for each ventilating system of the premises. The trade enquired whether the ventilating systems of the kitchen and the bar area could use the same exhaust outlet under such circumstances. In response, FSD expressed no objection to the above arrangement, but a ventilation/air conditioning control system and fire and smoke dampers or fire dampers might need to be installed for fire safety consideration. FEHD added that if the above ventilation/air conditioning control system and dampers were installed at suitable locations of the ventilating system in such a manner as to prevent fumes in the kitchen to enter the bar and the seating area through air ducts, the department would consider allowing the ventilating systems of the kitchen and bar area to use the same exhaust outlet.

14. BLGTF welcomes the flexible approach taken by FSD and FEHD.

Way forward

15. Members are invited to note the work progress of BLGTF. The Task Force will continue to oversee and monitor the work of BLGs.