

**Thirty-third Meeting of
the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee**

***Agenda Item 3(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 22 July 2016.

Work progress of the BLGTF

Overall progress of Business Liaison Groups

2. From 1 June to 15 September 2016, five Business Liaison Group (BLG) meetings were held. At these meetings, a total of 13 issues were satisfactorily resolved or clarified. Besides, five information dissemination sessions on new regulations and one consultation session on the proposed Mandatory Water Efficiency Labeling Scheme were conducted by the bureau/departments concerned.

Streamlining of procedures for processing alteration / addition applications from clubs operating billiard business

3. For a club providing four or more billiard tables, it must obtain a Certificate of Compliance (CoC) from the Home Affairs Department (HAD) for the club operation under the Clubs (Safety of Premises) Ordinance (Cap.376) and a Places of Amusement Licence (PAL) issued by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) for the billiard operation under the Places of Amusement Regulation (Cap.132BA). When such premises is to carry out alteration / addition (A&A) works at the licensed PAL area, it has to submit separate applications to HAD and LCSD for approval. LCSD refers the application to the Buildings Department (BD) for comment if there is no record that the PAL area is included in a CoC area.

4. At a BLG meeting for billiard establishments, public bowling-alleys and public skating rinks, the trade which operated billiard establishments in club premises expressed the concern over separate building safety inspections by BD and HAD. In response, LCSD, HAD and BD have jointly reviewed the existing procedure and worked out a comprehensive list of CoC encroached on PAL areas. Moreover, LCSD and HAD had established a notification mechanism to enable exchange of application information for keeping the list up-to-date. Hence, LCSD could refer A&A application raised by the existing billiard establishments which are encroached into club premises to HAD direct. As such, there would be only one single party to carry out building safety inspections in respect of A&A works on PAL areas covered by CoC.

5. BLGTF appreciates the business facilitation approach of LCSD.

Reducing Family Amusement Centres' administrative effort in compliance with the requirement of providing the Certificate of Fire Service Installation and Equipment (FS251)

6. Pursuant to the Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) Regulations (Cap. 95B), the owner of any fire service installation or equipment (FSI) installed in any premises shall keep such FSI in efficient working order at all times. Upon completion of FSI's installation, maintenance, repair or inspection, the registered contractor shall issue Certificate(s) of Fire Service Installations and Equipment (FS251) to the FSI owner with copies forwarded to the Director of Fire Services as documentary proof of compliance. From time to time, licensee of the premises may be required to produce or present the FS251s to inspection officers of Fire Services Department (FSD) proving the compliance.

7. At a BLG meeting for family amusement centres, the trade raised the concern that there had been officers of different units of the FSD requesting the trade to provide the FS251s of the same premises during inspection. As the FS251s of the FAC had been submitted to FSD by the FSI contractors, the trade enquired if FSD officers could refer to the FS251 records being kept by FSD. In response, FSD has reminded its relevant units to ascertain the latest FS251s of the licensed premises from the computer system before conducting inspections. Nevertheless, FSD may request the licensee to provide copy of FS251s in case of doubt or any other circumstances so warrant. The trade members are also advised to display the FS251s in a prominent location of

the premises to facilitate FSD's inspection.

8. BLGTF appreciates the business facilitation efforts of FSD.

Improving business-friendliness in electronic submission of liquor licence applications

9. Under the Dutiable Commodities (Liquor) Regulations (Cap.109B), any person seeking a liquor licence or club liquor licence shall make application in writing to the Liquor Licensing Board. The applicant may submit the application electronically to the Licensing Offices of Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) by filling the appropriate forms, attaching relevant information through electronic files and signing the forms through the system with digital signatures (e-Cert).

10. At a BLG meeting for hotels, the trade expressed the concern that it was not business friendly to use digital signatures for electronic liquor licence applications. In response, FEHD has advised that the Dutiable Commodities (Liquor) (Amendment) Regulation 2015, which came into effect on 3 August 2015, allows the trade an additional option to use a password assigned or approved by the authority for such applications. FEHD had updated the electronic application system and the first phase covering applications for renewal and amendment was launched in July 2016, while the second phase covering the remaining new and transfer applications would be launched in October 2016.

11. BLGTF appreciates the business facilitation approach of FEHD.

Exemption of karaoke establishment permit

12. According to the Karaoke Establishments Ordinance (Cap. 573) (KEO), except for certain types of karaoke establishments exempted from the requirements of permits or licence under the KEO, any person who on any occasion keeps, manages, operates or otherwise has control of a karaoke establishment must obtain a permit or licence from FEHD for restaurants.

13. At a recent BLG meeting for karaoke establishments, nightclubs, bars and other entertainment clubs, the bar trade enquired about the exemption criteria of karaoke establishment permit and the application procedure for exemption. In response, FEHD explained that any premises

(including bars) with restaurant licence and meeting the criteria for a bona fide restaurant can apply for exemption to FEHD with reference to the department's "A Guide to Application for Karaoke Establishment Permits in Restaurants".

14. BLGTF appreciates the clarification of FEHD.

Way forward

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

Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit,
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