

**Business Facilitation Advisory Committee
Task Force on Business Liaison Groups**

*Facilitation of guesthouses in compliance with 24-hour manned
counter requirement*

Background

Operation of guesthouses in Hong Kong is regulated by the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance (Cap. 349) (the Ordinance). Any premises providing sleeping accommodation at a fee with a tenancy term of less than 28 consecutive days shall obtain a licence under the Ordinance. The Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) under the Home Affairs Department is tasked with the issuance of licences and the subsequent enforcement work.

2. To enhance the safety and management of licensed premises under the Ordinance, the Government has recently introduced three Administrative Enhancement Measures (the Measures) to the existing licensing regime. One of them requires the licensee to provide a 24-hour manned counter to the guesthouse (general).

Trade's Concern

3. At a recent Business Liaison Group meeting for guesthouses, holiday flats and holiday camps, the guesthouse trade raised the concern about the high compliance cost of meeting the 24-hour manned counter requirement when there were physical constraint in the guesthouse premises. For example, the area near the entrance of a guesthouse was usually occupied by a guestroom, which might have to be converted into a counter in order to meet the new requirement.

Administration's Response

4. In response, the OLA has advised that it is the duty of the licensees to provide continuous personal supervision to the operation of the guesthouses under the Ordinance. The provision of a 24-hour manned counter under the Measures allows the patrons to receive the necessary assistance in case of emergency as well as the handling of emergency events at any time. If difficulties are encountered in complying with the new requirement, the OLA would consider alternative proposals put forward by the licensee. For example, guesthouses operating as a conglomerate could share a 24-hour manned counter provided that the guesthouse premises concerned are located within three consecutive floors of the same building, and means of 24-hour manned direct communication (e.g. intercom and CCTV system) between the guesthouse operator and patrons are available. An enquiry hotline (3107 3021) has been established for answering the trade's enquiries related to the Measures.

Way Forward

5. Members are invited to note the content of this paper and offer comments, if any.

Home Affairs Department
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