

**For information
on 15 May 2006**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

**Implementation of Five-day Week
in the Government**

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the plan to implement a five-day week in the Government in phases with effect from 1 July 2006.

BACKGROUND

2. The Chief Executive announced on 12 January 2006 the formation of a Working Group to examine the proposal and implementation details of introducing a five-day week in the Government with effect from 1 July 2006. In taking forward the proposal, the Administration's primary consideration is to maintain the overall level and efficiency of government services, and to adhere to the following basic principles -

- (a) no additional staffing resources;
- (b) no reduction in the conditioned hours of service of individual staff;
- (c) no reduction in emergency services; and
- (d) continued provision of some essential counter services on Saturdays.

3. Within the remit of the above basic principles and administrative guidelines provided by the Working Group, bureaux and departments (B/Ds) have drawn up implementation plans, taking into account possible implications on their statutory obligations, published performance pledges, occupational safety and health concerns, as well as staff and public reactions.

PHASED IMPLEMENTATION

4. Among the wide variety of services currently provided to the public, some can move to a five-day week without much impact on the community, whilst others may require more detailed examination and preparatory work. We have therefore decided to adopt a phased implementation approach.

Phase one: 1 July 2006

5. In phase one, i.e. starting from 1 July 2006, the following two main areas of work (involving about 59 000 officers) in the Government will migrate to a five-day week –

- (a) work with little or no direct public interface: offices which provide primarily in-house administrative, technical and professional support services. This will cover all bureaux¹ and most offices in departments; and
- (b) selected services with a direct public interface: public enquiries service, shroffs, customer service centres, counters for booking of public facilities and counters for various licence/permit application services as summarised at **Annex A**. The non-provision of these services on Saturdays will have no significant impact on the public.

6. We will maintain the level of service available to the public by ensuring that we compensate fully, if not more than, the closure of service on Saturdays to the public. As a matter of principle, we will fully compensate the opening hours lost on Saturdays (i.e. three hours in most cases) by extending the opening hours on weekdays.

7. B/Ds will take suitable measures to minimise the impact of the non-provision of those services described in paragraph 5(b) above on the public, including facilitating the greater use of electronic means for business transactions, provision of drop-in boxes, putting in place alternative payment channels, etc. B/Ds will closely monitor the reaction of their customers and the public to the implementation of a five-day week, with a view to fine-tuning the new arrangement.

Subsequent phases: 1 January 2007 and 1 July 2007

8. Some Heads of Department (HoDs) consider that owing to operational reasons (such as systems enhancement, provision of alternative means for business

¹ Exceptions include parts of the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB), e.g. government schools which follow their own school calendars, support services to schools and teachers, and parts of Housing Branch of Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau, e.g. material testing laboratory, site supervision, hawker control, warden service in housing for senior citizens.

transactions) or the need for legislative amendments, certain services may be provided on the five-day week basis in subsequent phases. Some HoDs need more time to explore the feasibility of extending the five-day week to other services, including consultation with staff and major stakeholders in the private sector. In order to synchronise the dissemination of information regarding further changes in service hours to the public, we plan to implement the second phase on 1 January 2007 and the last phase on 1 July 2007. We will inform Members of the implementation details of subsequent phases in due course.

9. At this stage and subject to further examination by B/Ds and consultation with staff and major stakeholders in the private sector, we estimate that some more services, involving some 15 000 officers, may be provided on the five-day week basis in subsequent phases. Examples of such services include search and registration services of lands/companies records, shroffs at public housing property management units for rent payment, etc.

Emergency and essential services

10. Apart from the services mentioned above, B/Ds consider the continued provision of the remaining services on Saturdays is essential and accordingly the service delivery patterns will basically remain unchanged. Emergency services, most notably those involving the maintenance of law and order, administration of penal institutions, provision of rescue services, etc., will continue to be provided round-the-clock. Examples of these services are summarised at **Annex B**.

11. In respect of those government functions which will continue to operate for more than five days in a week, some departments are examining the possibility of introducing a five-day week roster arrangement for some or all of the staff involved while adhering to the basic principles set out in paragraph 2 above. At present, around 11 100 staff (mainly in the disciplined service departments) are already working to roster systems which involve five shifts or less per week while maintaining the provision of services to the public on Saturdays and/or Sundays. Present indications are that a further 7 500 staff may be so covered by 1 July 2007. As the migration of the staff concerned to a five-day-work and two-day-rest week pattern will not impact on the services provided to the public, we consider such migration may be implemented as and when ready and beyond 1 July 2007 as necessary.

12. When all of the above are implemented, we believe there may remain some 54 000 officers² who would need to continue with their current work patterns unless we modify the two basic principles relating to no additional staffing resources and no reduction of conditioned hours.

² Excluding those civil servants working in government schools who follow the school calendar, those working in the Judiciary which is considering whether or not to implement a five-day week, and those working in the Hospital Authority, Vocational Training Council, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, etc.

Impact on staff

13. We attach great importance to safeguarding the occupational safety and health of staff when switching to a longer work-day but a shorter work-week pattern. Under the five-day week, the duty pattern of staff will generally be lengthened on a daily basis. B/Ds will continue to examine critically if the lengthened duty hours per day/shift is appropriate for all services under their purview, having regard to the nature of duties concerned and the age profile of staff. They will also closely monitor the impact of the longer duty hours on staff and make suitable adjustments as appropriate.

Consultation with staff

14. CSB has consulted the staff sides of the central consultative councils³ (staff sides) on the phased implementation approach and the proposal to maintain the existing leave administration arrangements. The staff sides support the initiative in principle and appeal to the management to extend the five-day week to as many staff as possible. They generally agree that maintaining service quality and efficiency is of primary importance and accept that some staff may not be able to switch to the five-day week on operational ground.

15. B/Ds have consulted staff through the appropriate departmental consultative channels. Apart from individual civil servants who may not move to the five-day week in phase one, civil servants in general welcome the initiative. Departmental management will take care to enable fair staff rotation to work in those areas that will migrate to the five-day week. Suitable staggered working hours will be put in place for staff to provide services under the extended opening hours, while maintaining the same conditioned hours of service.

Impact on the public

16. B/Ds have consulted the major stakeholders in the private sector, as appropriate, in their formulation of the phase one implementation plan. With the various complementary measures mentioned in paragraph 7 above, we believe the impact of the five-day week initiative on the general public should be manageable. Nevertheless, the switch to five-day week may affect B/Ds' ability to meet certain performance pledges, for example, when the pledged delivery time of a service includes Saturday (either as half or one working day) or when the pledged delivery time is short. B/Ds are actively examining the scope for compressing these performance pledges to ensure that the services covered in phase one of the implementation plan will continue to be delivered within the same calendar period as at present from 1 July onwards or to give an undertaking to deliver the relevant

³ The central consultative councils are the Senior Civil Service Council, the Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council, the Disciplined Services Consultative Council and the Police Force Council.

services by Friday where practicable. They will also closely monitor public reaction to service delivery and fine-tune the arrangements following the implementation of the five-day week.

Publicity

17. To ensure that members of the public are fully apprised of the impact on provision of government services prior to the implementation of five-day week, the Government will conduct extensive publicity between now and July 2006. For example, we have launched an official website (www.info.gov.hk/info/5day/) with links to individual B/D's homepages setting out the latter's opening hours under the five-day week initiative. Efficiency Unit's 24-hour hotline - 1823 Citizen's Easy Link – has been enhanced to provide a one-stop and ready source of information on the new opening hours of various government services.

WAY FORWARD

18. Members are invited to note the plan to introduce a five-day week in the Government in phases with effect from 1 July 2006.

Civil Service Bureau
May 2006

Implementation of Five-day Week in the Government

**Summary of services that will cease to be provided on Saturday¹
starting from the first phase on 1 July 2006**

Bureau/Department	Counter services/Functions	Alternative means of service delivery
Administration Wing	Archive reference service	Internet access to finding aids and selected archival images
Buildings Department	Counter for applications for various permits/plans under the Buildings Ordinance	Applications may be made by post
Census and Statistics Department	Statistical enquiry service, sale of statistical products, enquiries related to import and export declarations	Frequently asked statistics, sale of statistical data and general information are available in the departmental website. An Interactive Voice Response System may provide information on import and export declarations
Civil Service Bureau / Treasury	Resource Centre / Enquiry Service for pensioners (for general enquiry and issue of form TRY 447 to pensioners for seeking medical treatment)	General information about services to pensioners is available in the departmental website. Enquiries and requests for form TRY 447 can be made by phone, fax, post or email

¹ In addition to the relevant departmental headquarters or offices, services listed in this Annex will also switch to a five-day week starting from 1 July 2006.

Bureau/Department	Counter services/Functions	Alternative means of service delivery
Customs and Excise Department	Counters for processing registration of motor vehicles importers and distributors, assessment of provisional taxable value of imported vehicles, and licence/permits applications in respect of dutiable commodities	Submissions may be made by post, through electronic service or drop-in box
Civil Aviation Department	Counter for flight crew and aircraft maintenance engineers licencing	Applications may be made by post. Submissions by fax or emails are also acceptable if the original documents are not required for processing
Civil Engineering and Development Department	Services related to applications for sand removal permit and dumping licence	Applications may be made by post, fax, e-mail or through drop-in box
Department of Health	Health education and promotion, medical services by referral and/or appointments (family medicine clinic, clinical genetic service, child assessment service, school immunization team, student health service, elderly health service), one Travel Health Centre, families clinics for civil servants and eligible persons	Health education and promotion materials can be downloaded from the departmental website
Drainage Services Department	Inspection of drainage records, counter handling public enquiries on sewage charging	Telephone recording and hotline service are available for public enquiries
Economic Development and Labour Bureau	Services of Travel Agents Registry	Applications for licences may be made by post, fax or electronic means. A hotline is available for enquiries

Bureau/Department	Counter services/Functions	Alternative means of service delivery
Environmental Protection Department	Customer service counters, applications for various permits and licences by contractors and business operators, including those under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance and vehicle exhaust emission approval	Applications may be made by post, fax or electronic means
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department	Shroff /counters for various licencing service (e.g. food business licences, liquor licences and other trade licences/permits), for processing of hawker licences and market tenancies and for payment of departmental and related charges, counter for application and collection of import licence, and district pest control and special cleansing services ²	Payment of departmental and related charges may be made by post. Market stall rent may be paid at Post Offices, by post, by using Phone Payment System, through internet or Automated Teller Machines
Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau	Counter for searching/photocopying of insurers' register	Basic information on the insurers' register may be obtained from the OCI website
Fire Services Department	Counter and shroff for collection of fees and/or issue of licences and certification under various regulations	Applications and payment may be made by post
Government Logistics Department	Shroff for collection of fees for placing notices in the Gazette	Payment may be made by post

² District pest control and special cleansing service will be provided five days a week. Their service cessation dates will vary for different districts depending on operational needs, and will not necessarily fall on Saturdays or Sundays.

Bureau/Department	Counter services/Functions	Alternative means of service delivery
Home Affairs Department	Public Enquiry Service Centres and counter for the Office of the Licensing Authority for licencing of hotel and guesthouse accommodation, bedspace apartments, clubs and karaoke establishments	Request for information may be made by fax or e-mail to the department's central telephone enquiry centre. Licence applications may be submitted by post or electronic means, as appropriate
Housing Department	Offices providing public enquiries and management/maintenance services at public rental estates (except shroff for rent payment), receiving applications for public housing and related subsidies, checking of Housing Authority projects against the Buildings Ordinance	Departmental Communication Centre continues to handle emergency cases outside office hours. Applications for public housing may be made by post
Hong Kong Observatory	Counter at the Resource Centre for sale of Observatory publications, souvenirs and weather data	Request for service may be made by post, fax or electronic means. Publications will be available for sale at four Post Offices
Intellectual Property Department	Counter for applications for trademarks, patents and design, public enquiries and collection of fees	Submissions and payment may be made by electronic means or by post. Public enquiries may be made by e-mails or voice message
Inland Revenue Department	Enquiry counters, Business Registration counters, Stamp Duty counters	General information is available at the departmental website, other services may be provided by email, fax, post, ESD Life, or through drop-in box

Bureau/Department	Counter services/Functions	Alternative means of service delivery
Innovation and Technology Commission	Calibration service and accreditation service by appointment, product standards library service, standards sale service	Customers may send their requests for services by post, e-mail or fax. Library service and index of product standards are available at the departmental and related organisations' websites
Information Services Department	Counters for sale of government publications and photos	Public may purchase government publications by placing orders online, by fax or e-mail
Labour Department	Counters for services relating to employment, labour relations and employees' rights and benefits	Enquiries may be handled by the department's 24-hour hotline
Lands Department	Counter for general enquiry service, land administration (e.g. small house applications and government rent and premium enquiries), survey and mapping service (e.g. sale of maps)	Applications may be made by post or by fax where appropriate. Information is available at the departmental website

Bureau/Department	Counter services/Functions	Alternative means of service delivery
Leisure and Cultural Services Department	Shroff and counters at district leisure services offices and operator-assisted telephone service for booking of leisure facilities and enrolment to leisure activities, booking offices at cultural services venues	For booking leisure facilities (except hard-surface pitches) and enrolment to leisure activities, public may make use of the Leisure Link services available at leisure venues and on the internet. The Leisure Link Telephone Booking Service (operated by the Interactive Voice Response System) and enquiry service remain available from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm from Monday to Sunday. For booking of cultural services venues, applications may also be made by post or fax
Marine Department	Professional ship surveying and inspection services, marine industrial safety inspection, examination and certification for maritime qualification, and registration of ships, general enquiry services provided by four Marine Offices	Advance booking of service may be made by fax, by phone, e-mail or through drop-in box
Office of the Telecommunications Authority	Receiving applications for licences of telecommunications services	Applications may be made by post or through electronic means
Official Receiver's Office	Public enquiry and service counter/search service for bankruptcy/company wind-up cases, receipt of case documents, collection of petition deposits and provision of attestation service	Online search service is available at ESD Life; drop-in box is available for collection of documents; and hotline for handling public enquiries

Bureau/Department	Counter services/Functions	Alternative means of service delivery
Planning Department	Counter for submissions to the Town Planning Board	Submissions may be made by post
Registration and Electoral Office	Services relating to voter registration and conduct of public elections (except during periods of public elections)	Submission of voter registration forms may be made by post, fax or through ESD Life
Rating and Valuation Department	Counters for public enquiries and submission of forms relating to rating and Government rent matters	Enquiries may be made through the 24-Hour Enquiry Hotline or emails; submissions may be made by post, through electronic means or drop-in box
Security Bureau	Counter of the Security and Guarding Services Industry Authority for distributing various forms/printed materials relating to Security Company Licence (SCL) and Security Personnel permit and applications for SCL	Most forms/printed materials are available on the Authority's website
Student Financial Assistance Agency	Counters for applications for student financial assistance and loan documents and for collection of cheques and repayment demand notes	Submissions may be made through drop-in box

Bureau/Department	Counter services/Functions	Alternative means of service delivery
Social Welfare Department	Licensing service relating to elderly homes and drug dependents treatment centres, services provided by the Criminal and Law Enforcement Injuries Compensation Section, Traffic Accident Victims Assistance Section, and Senior Citizen Cards Office	For licencing service, applications and services by the Criminal and Law Enforcement Injuries Compensation and Traffic Accident Victims Assistance, submissions may be made through drop-in box, by post, fax or email. Applications for Senior Citizen Card may be made by post, through drop-in box and ESD Life. General information about all services are available through enquiry hotline, voicemail system and departmental website
Transport Department	Licencing of drivers and vehicles, applications for cross boundary closed road permits, change of driving test appointment, conducting written driving tests, licencing of public vehicles, vehicle examination booking service, conducting vehicle examination service at Kowloon and Sheung Kwai Chung Vehicle Examination Centres ³	Applications may be submitted by post or through drop-in box and ESD Life as appropriate
Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority	Counters for film classification, newspaper registration, entertainment licencing for amusement game centres, amusement with prizes, trade promotion competition, etc.	Submissions may be made by post or by fax as appropriate. Drop-in box will be arranged for registration of newspaper

³ Except for bus inspection and taxi meter sealing service at To Kwa Wan Vehicle Examination Centre (VEC) and the service provided by the contractor at New Kowloon Bay VEC.

Bureau/Department	Counter services/Functions	Alternative means of service delivery
Trade and Industry Department	Counters for Small and Medium Enterprises Funding Schemes Section, services in textiles licencing and origin certification ⁴ , licencing/registration relating to the controls on rough diamonds, ozone depleting substances, radioactive substances and irradiating apparatus, Hong Kong Service Supplier Certification service	Submissions may be made by post, fax, or electronic services as appropriate
Water Supplies Department	Document Management Centre (for submission of documents from licenced plumbers, Authorised Persons and the public)	Submissions may be made by post or by fax
Various bureaux and departments	Various information/resource centres	Some of the information is available at the departmental websites
Various bureaux and departments	Counters for submissions to various appeals boards	Submissions may be made by post, fax, or e-mail, as appropriate. Drop-in box may also be provided for submission of documents where applicable

⁴ Electronic services are available round the clock for most of the services in textiles licencing and origin certification. Some of the services are also available from other authorised organizations which will continue to operate on Saturdays, such as Government Approved Certification Organizations.

Implementation of Five-day Week in the Government

Examples of essential or emergency services that will maintain the status quo

Bureau/Department	Service/Functions
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	Patrolling and law enforcement in country parks and marine parks, management of wholesale markets
Buildings Department	Round-the-clock service for emergencies relating to buildings, building works, signboards and slopes
Customs and Excise Department /Immigration Department	Passenger and cargo clearance operations at control points, airport and passenger/cargo terminals
Customs and Excise Department	Law enforcement and essential logistics services for Customs operations
Civil Aviation Department	Round-the-clock air traffic control service

Bureau/Department	Service/Functions
Buildings Department / Civil Engineering and Development Department / Drainage Services Department / Highways Department / Housing Department / Environmental Protection Department	Services / operation related to the construction industry (e.g. supervision and auditing of construction works, supervision of operation of landfills and refuse transfer stations, operations related to explosive and blasting activities)
Correctional Services Department	Management of penal institutions
Department of Health	Port health, tobacco control office, public health laboratory services, methadone clinics, clinic service to inmates in correctional institutions, public mortuaries and cremation permit offices
Drainage Services Department	Direct labour force handling blockage and clearing blocked sewers/drains
Education and Manpower Bureau	Government schools and related support services to schools and teachers (including Central Resource Centre, Lui Kee Education Services Centre, Regional Education Offices, Special Education Services Centres, Special Education Resource Centre)
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department	Gas incident investigations under the Gas Safety Ordinance

Bureau/Department	Service/Functions
Environmental Protection Department	Handling of environmental pollution incidents involving immediate threat to health, investigation of illegal import/export of ozone depleting substances, providing assistance to deal with significant spillage of chemicals, supervision of the operation of waste facilities, provision of Air Pollution Index
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department	Environmental hygiene services, hawker management and control, market management, cemetery, booking and use of crematorium and columbarium services, dead removal, slaughterhouse, import inspection services, duty room services (for reporting food complaint / poisoning, removal of dead animals and other emergencies)
Fire Services Department	Emergency fire, rescue and ambulance services, response to complaint of fire hazard posing imminent danger to public safety or dangerous goods
Government Flying Service	Emergency response services
Immigration Department	Immigration-related counter services (birth and death registration, marriage ceremony, registration of persons, issuance of visas and other employment-related documents, issuance of HKSAR passport and travel documents), notification system with the Mainland over major incidents
Housing Department	Hawker control, warden service in housing for senior citizens, handling of emergency cases outside office hours and material testing laboratory (concrete testing)
Hong Kong Police Force	Maintenance of public order and law enforcement
Hong Kong Post	Mail delivery and post office counter services

Bureau/Department	Service/Functions
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau	Notification system with the Mainland over disease outbreaks
Information Services Department	24-hour service provided by Press Enquiry Desk
Legal Aid Department	Counters for applications for legal aid, shroff offices
Leisure and Cultural Services Department	Libraries, performing arts venues, indoor stadia, ticketing services, music training, leisure and recreational venues
Labour Department	Job centres, occupational health clinics, handling of urgent cases of labour disputes and investigation of occupational accidents
Marine Department	Management of ferry terminals and public cargo working areas, round-the-clock emergency/search and rescue services, vessel traffic regulation and harbour patrol
Office of the Telecommunications Authority	Radio monitoring and interference investigation
Registration and Electoral Office	Essential services as required by the respective ordinances on Saturdays during election / by-election periods
Radio Television Hong Kong	TV and radio programmes, news reporting, internet services

Bureau/Department	Service/Functions
Social Welfare Department	Services provided by Integrated Family Service Centres, Family and Child Protective Services Units, Medical Social Services Units in hospitals and departmental hotline service unit
Transport Department	Operation of Emergency Transport Coordination Centre, monitoring performance of management contractors of government transport facilities and operation of control room for Area Traffic Control
Water Supplies Department	Operation of water selling kiosks, water treatment plants and pumping stations, attendance to water supply fault complaints and emergency calls, maintenance of distribution system
Various bureaux and departments	Territory-wide museums and some resource centres