

COMMUNITY SPORTS COMMITTEE

Proposed Arrangement on Allocation of Swimming Lanes and Weekly Cleansing Programme at Public Swimming Pools

PURPOSE

This paper sets out –

- (a) the proposed allocation arrangement for use of swimming lanes at public swimming pools on trial basis starting from 1 April 2005; and
- (b) the weekly cleansing programme of public swimming pools for implementation in the 2005 swimming season.

(A) Allocation arrangement for use of swimming lanes

1. Background

2. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) manages 36 swimming pool complexes. The public swimming pools cater for both casual use by individual members of the public and organized use by group users. To enable a fair allocation of facilities among different users and to balance their competing demands, booking procedure setting out the priorities of different uses and quota for individual and group uses have been devised for venue management to process applications for use of swimming facilities from different hirers.

3. Users of our swimming pools can be broadly classified into two major types –

- (a) Organizations may block book facilities for organized activities up to 3 to 12 months in advance through submission of applications to the swimming pools concerned. The priorities of these organizations are as follows –
- (i) Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and LCSD;
 - (ii) Schools (during normal school hours);
 - (iii) Hong Kong Amateur Swimming Association (HKASA), Hong Kong Canoe Union (HKCU), Hong Kong Life Saving Society (HKLSS), Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped (HKSAM), Hong Kong Paralympic Committee and Sports Association for the Physically Disabled (HKPC&SAP), Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation (HKSR), Hong Kong Triathlon Association (HKTriA), Hong Kong Underwater Association (HKUA) (hereinafter called the National Sports Associations (NSAs)), Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, Community Sports Clubs, District Sports Associations (DSAs), The New Territories Regional Sports Association (NTRSA) and Hong Kong Schools Sports Federation;
 - (iv) any other affiliated clubs or members of the organizations specified in (iii) above;
 - (v) subvented non-governmental organizations; and
 - (vi) Government departments.
- (b) individual members of the public for use of the facilities during the normal opening hours.

II. Allocation Arrangements of Swimming Pool Facilities

4. Normally, not more than four swimming lanes in each pool complex may be allocated for block booking for training purpose during weekdays and Saturday mornings. Additionally, not more than half of the total number of swimming lanes available for block booking is allowed to be booked by one hirer at any one time. As for the rest of the Saturday period,

Sunday and public holiday, no block booking by organizations is entertained and the pools are for use by individual swimmers.

5. Where applications for booking of swimming lane are received from organizations under the same priority but with overlapping periods, the pool in charge would first liaise with the respective organizations to explore whether the bookings can be revised to avoid overlapping. If competing demand for the booking of overlapping periods cannot be resolved through compromise, balloting will be used to determine the allocation. It is common that we receive competing bookings from organizations for some of the popular pools, e.g. Kowloon Park Swimming Pool, Morrison Hill Swimming Pool, Shing Mun Valley Swimming Pool, Sha Tin Jockey Club Swimming Pool, Fanling Swimming Pool, Yuen Long Swimming Pool, etc. for the popular period from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

6. Problems encountered under the current balloting arrangement of facilities include –

- (a) LCSD has received feedback from some of the NSAs that the above allocation arrangement is undesirable as there is a lack of certainty in the balloting arrangement for them to secure booking of swimming lanes and their training programmes could often be disrupted if their ballots are not drawn;
- (b) when the swimming clubs could not secure their bookings at the same venue, their trainees would have to move from one venue to another for different booking period and this is very inconvenient to the trainees as well as the club management;
- (c) hirers tend to concentrate on booking of popular venues during the peak hours (from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.) on weekdays or during the second session break;
- (d) in order to increase the chance of success in the balloting exercise, some NSAs tend to recruit more affiliated member clubs so that they could submit more applications for balloting; and

- (e) LCSD has received negative feedback from the HKASA on the higher booking priority from schools during the school hours from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on the weekdays between 1 September and 15 July each year. This has to a certain extent hamper the training programmes of the NSAs which also fall on these hours. The HKASA has requested the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) to review the need for priority booking by schools during these hours (i.e. from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.) and suggested that school groups should confine their priority booking to the hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. so that pool facilities could be spared for NSAs' use after normal school hours.

7. Feedback has been received from most concerned NSAs that the current balloting arrangement is not desirable and would result in an unhealthy competition for use of swimming lanes among NSAs and their affiliated clubs. Moreover, reconciliation of competing demand at individual pool level was also not effective.

III. Proposed Arrangement of Allocation of Pool Facilities to Major Hirers

8. Against the above background, the Department had convened a number of meetings with the major NSA hirers and noted that they would be prepared to accept the arrangement for allocation of swimming lanes through an advanced and centralized agreement among the various major hirers. In order to address the problem of keen competition for use of popular pools during peak hours, these NSAs have also agreed in principle that they would use other less popular pools where possible as there are spare capacities at these venues and there is certainty in using such venues to provide their training classes. After some discussions with the NSAs, it has been generally agreed that the following principles would be adopted under the proposed arrangement –

- (a) LCSD continues to have the top priority in the allocation;
- (b) Schools have priority for bookings during school hours but a review would be conducted on whether lanes available for priority booking for schools be reduced to no more than half of

the available lanes for block booking during the hours from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., leaving half of the available lanes for use by the NSAs;

- (c) booking requirements by DSA, NTRSA, HKPC&SAP, HKSAM and HKUA would be accepted as far as possible as their requirements are usually small in comparison with the NSAs;
- (d) the lane allocations to each NSA would be reviewed at the end of each swimming season based on the utilization pattern. Should any of the major users fail to take up the booking of the allocated lanes without good reasons, their requirement for the next swimming season would be curtailed; and
- (e) once the allocation of lanes to these major hirers is agreed, the NSAs and their club members will submit applications to the respective pool management for processing based on the agreed allocation arrangements. The pool management will process the applications in the normal manner. In the event that there is still a clash in booking and no compromise can be reached, the applications will be processed by balloting and the lane would be strictly assigned to the applicant drawn.

The NSAs and NTRSA have in principle agreed to the above proposed arrangement to be carried out as a trial with effect from 1 April 2005 for one year subject to further discussion with EMB on the reduced allocation of swimming lanes for school use from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on the weekdays.

IV. Present Position

9. The major users have already submitted their lane requirements to LCSD for allocation for the coming swimming season. We have tried to allocate the lanes to them based on their requirements as far as possible. For clashes in demand, the NSAs concerned have been requested to consider shifting their requirements to the less popular pools or to the less popular hours when the lanes could be made available. Indeed, there is some success in shifting the NSAs to make use of less popular pools. For instance, in 2004, the usage rates of the swimming lanes for NSAs during the period of 5:00 p.m.

to 8:00 p.m. at North Kwai Chung Jockey Club Swimming Pool, Kennedy Town Swimming Pool and Tsing Yi Swimming Pool were 0.2%, 3% and 7% respectively. In 2005, based on the NSAs' agreement to use less popular swimming pools, the anticipated usage rates of these pools to be used by NSAs during the same hours will be increased to 95%, 67% and 93% respectively. The proposed allocation plan for each major user has been worked out with their agreement.

V. Way Forward

10. We will evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed allocation arrangement by the end of this swimming season and EMB will be requested to review whether a maximum of half of the total swimming lanes available for school use during the hours from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays can be allocated for use by the other major users to facilitate their swimming training.

(B) Weekly Cleansing Programme of Public Swimming Pools in 2005 Swimming Season

I. Background

11. In September 2004, the Department implemented a weekly cleansing programme to enhance the hygienic standard of public swimming pools. In addition to the normal daily cleansing work carried out at the pools, the public swimming pools were each closed half a day per week from 1:00 p.m. till 10:00 p.m. for carrying out thorough cleansing including their surrounding environment. The result was found satisfactorily and the hygienic standard of the pools were improved in general. The Department received, however, request from the Hong Kong Amateur Swimming Association (HKASA) to open the swimming pools in the evening session to cater for the training needs of swimming clubs.

12. In view of the effectiveness of the weekly cleansing programme, the arrangement was extended to cover the heated swimming pools which remain open in the winter. The closing time for the weekly cleansing programme was adjusted and the pools were closed from 10:00 a.m. to the end of the second session in the afternoon so as to cater for the needs of

training/swimming in the evening and night session. Moreover, there were less swimmers using the pool during closure period. It could minimize the inconvenience caused to the public. Members were informed of the arrangement at the meeting held on 28 October 2004 vide Committee Paper CSC 7/2004. The Districts Councils were also informed about the revised arrangement and were supportive to the change.

13. The weekly cleansing programme for heated swimming pools in winter has now been implemented for four months. It was well received by the public who appreciate and welcome the higher hygiene standard of the pools after the implementation of the programme. The HKASA welcomed the new arrangement as it would enable them to conduct training in the evening session. Individual swimmers could also enjoy swimming in the evening session. No major difficulties were encountered by pool staff in carrying out the cleansing work during the revised closure period.

II. Proposed Weekly Cleansing Programme for 2005

14. As the arrangement for closing the heated pools for cleansing from 10:00 a.m. in the morning to the end of the second session in the afternoon is found satisfactorily, we propose to extend the arrangement to cover all the public swimming pools in the 2005 swimming season. The proposed weekly cleansing programme of public swimming pools in the 2005 swimming season is at the **Annex**.

15. In working out the weekly cleansing programme, consideration has been given to maintaining six to eight pool complexes (there are 36 pool complexes) to be closed on each day in different districts or regions so as to minimize inconvenience caused to the public. We have also consulted the Steering Committee on Management of Swimming Pools on the weekly cleansing programme for public swimming pools in 2005 swimming season and received the Steering Committee's support.

III. Publicity

16. Suitable publicity will be arranged to inform the public about the arrangements through the media. Notices will also be displayed at the swimming pools to inform the public. The Department will also brief the

District Councils on the arrangement.

PRESENTATION

17. Members are invited to express their views on the arrangements presented in this paper.

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Leisure and Cultural Services Department
March 2005

**Weekly Cleansing Programme of Public Swimming Pools in 2005
Swimming Season**

Day		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Time		10 a.m. to the end of the second session				
District	Swimming Pool					
Southern	Pao Yue Kong		√			
Central & Western	Kennedy Town			√		
Wan Chai	Wan Chai					√
	Morrison Hill*				√	
Eastern	Victoria Park	√				
	Island East*			√		
	Chai Wan		√			
Sham Shui Po	Lai Chi Kok Park			√		
	Lei Cheng Uk				√	
	Sham Shui Po Park					√
Yau Tsim Mong	Kowloon Park*		√			
Kowloon City	Tai Wan Shan				√	
	Ho Man Tin*			√		
	Kowloon Tsai	√				
Wong Tai Sin	Morse Park					√
	Hammer Hill Road*	√				
Kwun Tong	Jordan Valley*		√			
	Kwun Tong			√		
Islands	Mui Wo					√
Tuen Mun	Tuen Mun				√	
	The Jockey Club Yan Oi Tong		√			
Yuen Long	Yuen Long			√		
	Tin Shui Wai*				√	
Tsuen Wan	Tsuen King Circuit Wu Chung		√			

	Shing Mun Valley*	√				
Kwai Tsing	Kwai Shing					√
	North Kwai Chung Jockey Club	√				
	Tsing Yi				√	
North	Fanling*		√			
	Sheung Shui				√	
Tai Po	Tai Po	√				
Sha Tin	Sha Tin Jockey Club*					√
	Hin Tin				√	
	Ma On Shan		√			
Sai Kung	Tseung Kwan O*	√				
	Sai Kung			√		
Total		7	8	7	8	6

Remark : If the weekly cleansing day of the pool falls on a public holiday, the pool will be open for public use.

* These swimming pools will be closed for maintenance in 2005 swimming season as follows :

Morrison Hill	May and June
Island East	2-31 October
Kowloon Park	April to June (Indoor pools)
Ho Man Tin	April and May
Hammer Hill Road	April to June (Indoor pools)
Jordan Valley	April and May
Tin Shui Wai	April
Shing Mun Valley	September and October (Indoor pools)
Fanling	April and May (Main pool)
Sha Tin Jockey Club	April and May (Main pool and Diving pool)
Tseung Kwan O	April to 26 May (Main pool)