

**For information
on 20 April 2015**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE**

**The manpower situation and the request for
a grade structure review of civil service lifeguards**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the manpower situation and the Government's views on the request for a grade structure review (GSR) of civil service lifeguards.

Background

2. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) currently manages 43 public swimming pools, 41 gazetted beaches and five water sports centres. To ensure the safety of swimmers, lifeguards are engaged to perform lookout, patrol, lifesaving and first aid duties at these venues. As at 1 August 2014, there were 2 121 lifeguards comprising 161 senior lifeguards and 1 960 lifeguards in LCSD. Of those 1 960 lifeguards, 951 civil service lifeguards and 70 Ex-Councils Contract (ECC) lifeguards were employed on a long-term regular basis whereas another 939 non-civil service contract (NCSC) seasonal lifeguards were employed on a seasonal basis to augment the lifeguard manpower during the swimming season.

3. As far as civil service lifeguards are concerned, lifeguards and senior lifeguards belong to the Artisan grade and Senior Artisan grade respectively. Lifeguards in the Artisan grade are remunerated at Master Pay Scale (MPS) points 5 to 8 (\$14,245 to \$17,200) whereas those in the Senior Artisan grade are remunerated at MPS points 8 to 10 (\$17,200 to \$19,410). Their pay scales are the same as other grades under *Qualification Group 6 - Technician, Supervisory and Related Grades Group II: Craft and Skill Plus Experience, or Apprenticeship Plus Experience*. Lifeguards are further deployed to two different

streams, namely the beach/swimming pool and water sports centre. The duties of lifeguards are set out at **Annex A**. The strength of civil service lifeguards in LCSD in the past five years is set out at **Annex B**.

Manpower Situation of Civil Service Lifeguards

Measures to strengthen the manpower of civil service lifeguards

4. The safety of swimmers and players of water sports centres have always been LCSD's prime concern when considering the manpower requirements of lifeguards. LCSD has from time to time reviewed the lifeguard manpower arrangements for pools, beaches as well as water sports centres, taking into account the actual operational needs. In order to review the lifeguard manpower in a more comprehensive manner, LCSD set up a "Working Group on Lifeguard Manpower Review" in 2013 to serve as an effective platform to collect views from frontline staff and staff unions concerned. After reviewing the lifeguard manpower in the past three years, an additional \$14 million have been allocated annually in the past three years to increase more than 160 lifeguard places at different times for employment of NCSC seasonal lifeguards for existing swimming pools and beaches.

5. Where justified, LCSD will create additional civil service lifeguard posts in accordance with the established procedures. In fact, the total number of civil service lifeguards has increased by 27% from 893 in 2011 to 1 133 in March 2015. Another 21 civil service Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool) posts will be created in 2015-16 to enhance the manpower at swimming pools.

Other human resource management measures for civil service lifeguards

6. Apart from increasing the manpower of civil service and seasonal lifeguards, LCSD has implemented a series of measures with a view to increasing the overall supply of lifeguard and relieving the work pressure of existing lifeguards. These measures include the following:

- (a) LCSD has given priority to increasing the number of seasonal lifeguards at beaches in the swimming season. In the recruitment exercise of seasonal lifeguards for the 2015 swimming season, the monthly salary of beach seasonal

lifeguards has been raised slightly higher than that of their counterparts working in swimming pools by \$700 to \$14,815 in order to attract more qualified persons to become seasonal lifeguards at beaches and enhance the overall manpower supply of lifeguards;

- (b) LCSD has launched a Pilot Training Scheme for seasonal lifeguards at beaches this year which integrates training, placement and appointment under one scheme and streamlines the recruitment process. Trainees who have received about four weeks of paid training and internship, and have successfully acquired the Beach Lifeguard Award upon completion of this training programme will be appointed as beach seasonal lifeguards directly;
- (c) LCSD has streamlined the recruitment process and expedited the lifeguard supply chain by inviting full-time seasonal lifeguards to continue to serve on a part-time basis upon completion of their contracts till the next swimming season; and
- (d) LCSD has been liaising with some schools and organisations to explore collaborative effort and encourage them to organise lifesaving training programmes with an aim of increasing lifeguard manpower supply in the long run.

7. On enhancing the lifesaving skills and professionalism of civil service lifeguards, LCSD allocates substantial resources to their training every year. In 2014-15, LCSD has provided a total of over 6 000 days of training for lifeguards, representing an average of 5.5 days of training received by each lifeguard. LCSD will continue to allocate resources to provide civil service lifeguards with a wide array of training opportunities in order to help improve the lifesaving skills and professionalism of lifeguards.

8. On career development, serving civil service lifeguards in the Artisan grade can apply for appointment as Senior Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool), Senior Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) and Amenities Assistant III (AA III)¹ (remunerated at MPS

¹ The Amenities Assistant (AA) grade is a civil service grade with four ranks comprising the AA III, the AA II, the AA I and the Senior AA ranks. AA IIIs may be deployed to different sports and recreational venues including swimming pools and beaches. When deployed to aquatic venues, they are the supervisors of swimming pools and beaches

points 7 – 11) if they meet the entry requirements. In the past five years, a total of 65 lifeguards in the Artisan grade have been appointed as Senior Artisans (Beach/Swimming Pool). In addition, eight senior lifeguards and seven lifeguards have been appointed as AA IIIs through in-service appointment. In the coming ten years, there will be over 80 vacancies in the Senior Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool) and Senior Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) ranks. Furthermore, over 190 Amenities Assistants will retire in the coming six years. Hence, serving lifeguards may consider pursuing their career development by applying for appointment as Senior Artisans or AA IIIs.

Request for a GSR of civil service lifeguards

9. To implement the Government's civil service pay policy², the Government has put in place the Improved Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism (Improved Mechanism) in 2007, under which three regular pay surveys are conducted to ascertain whether civil service pay and private sector pay are broadly comparable. With the implementation of the Improved Mechanism and the ensuing civil service pay adjustments, the pay of non-directorate civilian grades can be kept broadly comparable with that of their private sector counterparts. This will enable most, if not all, non-directorate civilian grades to recruit people of suitable calibre and to retain and motivate them. GSRs will therefore only be considered for individual non-directorate civilian civil service grades under the following circumstances –

- (a) the concerned grades have proven and persistent recruitment and retention difficulties which cannot be resolved through the regular pay surveys under the Improved Mechanism; or
- (b) there are fundamental changes to the job nature, job complexity and level of responsibilities of the grades.

10. Having regard to the number of vacancies, the number of suitable candidates identified and the number of offers made and accepted in past recruitment exercises, LCSD considers that there is no recruitment

responsible for the daily management and operation of the swimming pools and beaches as well as the supervisors of lifeguards.

² The Government's civil service pay policy is to offer sufficient remuneration to attract, retain and motivate staff of suitable calibre to provide the public with an effective and efficient service; and such remuneration is to be regarded as fair by both civil servants and the public they serve by maintaining broad comparability between civil service and private sector pay.

difficulty for civil service lifeguards. In the past three years, the resignation rate of civil service lifeguards has also been lower than the average civil service resignation rate, suggesting that there is no retention difficulty. Civil service lifeguards therefore do not meet the first criterion for conducting GSR. The recruitment and retention figures of civil service lifeguard in the past five years are at **Annex C**.

11. As for the second criterion for conducting GSR, it should be pointed out that with the changes in public expectations and social circumstances, etc., the workload of lifeguards may have increased over time. However, there have been no fundamental changes to the job nature, job complexity and level of responsibilities of civil service lifeguards. Hence, there is no ground for a GSR based on the second criterion as set out in paragraph 9 above. To help civil service lifeguards cope with the increased workload, LCSD has strengthened the manpower of lifeguards and put in place appropriate human resource management measures as set out in paragraphs 4 to 8 above.

Continuous communication with staff

12. LCSD all along maintains close contact and frequent dialogues with Government lifeguards and the union representatives through different channels, such as meetings, briefings, open forums, visits and informal gatherings, to exchange views on and promote mutual understanding in management issues about lifeguards. LCSD will continue to communicate closely with the grade members and exchange views with them on operational and staff issues concerning Government lifeguards, and take appropriate follow up action whenever necessary.

Advice sought

13. Members are invited to note this paper.

**Civil Service Bureau
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
April 2015**

**Major Duties of Lifeguards in the
Leisure and Cultural Services Department**

Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool)

- (a) Lifesaving duties;
- (b) First aid duties;
- (c) Assisting in law enforcement and maintenance of order;
- (d) Assisting in cleansing work; and
- (e) Winter work duties.

**Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) and Artisan
(Beach/Swimming Pool) serving in water sports centres**

- (a) Performing lifesaving and first aid duties;
- (b) Assisting in law enforcement and maintenance of order;
- (c) Patrolling water sports activities areas on rescue boat and watching participants carrying out water sports activities;
- (d) Directing participants in getting in and out of crafts and towing / launching the crafts into water and taking them out of water and back to the water sports centre;
- (e) Assisting in issuing and collection of water sports equipment / gears and assuring that they are in good condition before and after use;
- (f) Cleansing, minor repairs and maintenance of the water sports equipment;
- (g) Assisting in cleansing work; and
- (h) Winter work duties

Senior Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool)

- (a) Deputising the Amenities Assistant in-charge;
- (b) Supervising Artisans (Beach/Swimming Pool), contract lifeguards and other junior staff in carrying out daily operations and district winter work programmes;
- (c) Directing and performing lifesaving operations and first aid services,

- inspecting lifesaving and first aid equipment and ensuring that they are adequate and serviceable at all times;
- (d) Training of Artisans (Beach/Swimming Pool) and contract lifeguards, and assisting in implementing the departmental drill programmes; and
 - (e) Assisting in enforcing the relevant by-laws/regulations.

Senior Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) and Senior Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool) serving in water sports centres

- (a) Supervising Artisans (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre), contract lifeguards and other junior staff;
- (b) Directing and performing lifesaving, rescue of crafts and first aid services;
- (c) Training of Artisans (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) and contract lifeguards in drilling, and implementing the rescue operations;
- (d) Supervising and performing the inspection, issuing, maintenance and minor repairs of water sports equipment;
- (e) Maintaining proper records of water sports equipment, ensuring that they are safe to use and in sea-worthy condition; arranging necessary maintenance and replacement to defected crafts, gears and fittings;
- (f) Arranging necessary training in respect of water sports skills and maintenance of equipment to lifeguards and junior staff;
- (g) Arranging roster and daily duty posts for lifeguards and junior staff;
- (h) Assisting centre instructor to run training courses;
- (i) Conducting and leading the Artisans and Workmen to achieve winter works programmes;
- (j) Performing janitor duty and maintenance of order and law enforcement where applicable;
- (k) Training and supervising Artisans and Workmen in performing general duties; and
- (l) Ensuring the motor rescue boats are handled and kept properly.

Annex B

Strength of Civil Service Lifeguards in the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in 2011 – 2015

| Grade | Year* | | | | | 2015^ vs 2011 | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|---------------|-------|
| | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015^ | No. | % |
| Senior Artisan | | | | | | | |
| 1. Senior Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool) | 126 | 152 | 163 | 158 | 165 | +39 | +31% |
| 2. Senior Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Artisan | | | | | | | |
| 1. Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool) | 755 | 847 | 947 | 942 | 946# | +191 | +25% |
| 2. Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) | 9 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 19 | +10 | +111% |
| Total | 893 | 1 010 | 1 121 | 1 112 | 1 133# | +240 | +27% |

Notes

* as at 1 August of each year

^ as at 31 March 2015

An additional 21 Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool) posts will be created in 2015-16 to enhance the lifeguard manpower at swimming pools.

**Recruitment and Retention Figures of
the Beach/Swimming Pool (B/SP) and Lifeguard at Water Sports
Centre (LGWSC) Streams of the Artisan and Senior Artisan Grades**

(a) Recruitment*(i) B/SP Stream of the Artisan Grade*

| Year | Projected vacancies | Applications received | Offers made and accepted |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2014-15 | 20 | 1 103 | 46 |
| 2013-14 | | | 53 |
| 2012-13 | 146* | 1 216* | 147 |
| 2011-12 | | | 151 |
| 2010-11 | | | 71 |

Note

* The recruitment exercise was launched in March 2010.

(ii) B/SP Stream of the Senior Artisan Grade

| Year | Projected vacancies | Applications received | Offers made and accepted |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2014-15 | 13 | 245 [^] | 12 [^] |
| 2013-14 | 33 | 233 | 10 |
| 2012-13 | | | 16 |
| 2011-12 | | | 29 |
| 2010-11 | | | — |

Note

[^] The selection interview-cum-trade test session was completed in March 2015. Offers will be made to the selected candidates upon completion of recruitment formalities.

(iii) *LGWSC Stream of the Artisan Grade*

| Year | Projected vacancies | Applications received | Offers made and accepted |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2014-15 | 12 | 110 | 12 |
| 2013-14 | | | 2 |
| 2012-13 | 2 | 160 | 1 |
| 2011-12 | | | – |
| 2010-11 | | | 2 |

(iv) *LGWSC Stream of the Senior Artisan Grade*

- No recruitment exercise was conducted in the past five years.

(b) Retention

Resignations

| Rank | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Artisan (B/SP Stream) | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Senior Artisan (B/SP Stream) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Artisan (LGWSC Stream) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Senior Artisan (LGWSC Stream) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total* | 1 (0.12%) | 2 (0.23%) | 2 (0.20%) | 4 (0.37%) | 1 (0.09%) |

Note

* Figures in () are the percentages of resignees to the total establishment of the B/SP and LGWSC streams of Artisan and Senior Artisan grades.