

**For information on
17 December 2018**

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

**Civil Service Lifeguards of
the Leisure and Cultural Services Department**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the qualifications, training, grade structure and manpower situation of civil service lifeguards of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD).

Background

2. LCSD currently provides lifeguard services at 44 public swimming pools, 38 gazetted beaches and five water sports centres. As at 1 August 2018, there were 1 959 lifeguards comprising 174 senior lifeguards and 1 785 lifeguards in LCSD. Of those 1 785 lifeguards, 687 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 (\$16,790 to \$20,270) whereas senior lifeguards in the Senior Artisan grade are remunerated at MPS points 8 to 10 (\$20,270 to \$22,865). Their pay scales are the same as other grades requiring similar qualifications under *Qualification Group 6 (Technician, Supervisory and Related Grades) – Group II (Craft and Skill Plus Experience, or Apprenticeship Plus Experience)*. Lifeguards are deployed to two different streams, namely the beach/swimming pool and water sports centre. The duties of lifeguards are set out at **Annex 1**.

Qualifications of Lifeguards

4. It is LCSD's requirement that all serving and prospective lifeguards shall possess lifeguard awards issued by the Hong Kong Life Saving Society (HKLSS), which is the only body recognised by the International Life Saving Federation for assessing and awarding lifeguard qualifications in Hong Kong. The entry requirements for civil service lifeguards in LCSD include the possession of the Beach Lifeguard Award and Pool Lifeguard Award issued or reassessed by HKLSS within the past three years. NCSC seasonal lifeguards are also required to have the Beach Lifeguard Award or Pool Lifeguard Award issued or reassessed by HKLSS within the past three years. Civil service lifeguards are also required to possess a valid certificate from the St. John Ambulance Association, Hong Kong Red Cross or Auxiliary Medical Service. Applicants for the posts of civil service lifeguard and NCSC seasonal lifeguard have to pass the selection interview and trade test. Other recruitment procedures, including integrity checking and medical examination etc., are also applicable.

Lifeguard Training

5. LCSD has always attached great importance on lifeguard training and has its own dedicated Training Section to provide suitable training to staff of various grades. LCSD allocates substantial resources to provide civil service lifeguards with a wide array of training opportunities every year and conducts reviews of the training arrangement in order to help improve their lifesaving skills and professionalism so as to meet the operational needs of the department. The Training Section plans and provides lifeguard training courses of different types, including specific vocational training for lifeguards (e.g. induction course, compulsory refresher courses on lifesaving and first aid skills) and other skills upgrading programmes (e.g. courses on skin diving rescue and scuba diving rescue skills), and general training courses for staff of all grades (including lifeguards) (e.g. courses on spoken English and customer service skills, occupational safety and health workshop, etc.). At present, vocational training courses provided for lifeguards by LCSD and the relevant accreditation are normally assessed and issued by authorised institutions, which are well recognised both locally and internationally.

6. LCSD has all along been working in co-operation with relevant professional departments and institutions, including the Department of Health, the Hospital Authority, the Auxiliary Medical Service and the Hong Kong Life Saving Society, etc., in designing and providing lifeguard training. Their professional expertise, skills, equipment and recognised status are conducive to the provision of suitable training to the lifeguards. LCSD will build on the well-established and sound foundation to enhance collaboration and communication with the partners to ensure that the contents, design and standards of lifeguard training courses can keep abreast of time. The Training Section of LCSD has been effective in promoting and planning training for lifeguards with regard to actual operational needs. Advice will also be sought from the above professional departments/institutions if necessary to further enhance the training standard. LCSD will continue allocating additional resources to provide enhanced vocational training for lifeguards to improve their lifesaving skills and professionalism.

7. Besides, all LCSD lifeguards are required to participate in regular rescue drills (including skin diving drill) and drills for mobilization plans at their workplace to ensure that they know well the corresponding rescue operation under different circumstances.

Request for a Grade Structure Review of Civil Service Lifeguards

8. 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. To implement this policy, the Government put in place the Improved Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism (Improved Mechanism) in 2007, under which regular pay surveys are conducted to ascertain whether civil service pay and private sector pay are broadly comparable. It is the Government's policy that grade structure reviews will only be considered for individual non-directorate civilian civil service grades when the following criteria are met:

- (a) the 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.

9. There are no proven and persistent recruitment and retention difficulties for civil service lifeguards. Recent recruitment experience has shown that the number of candidates usually far exceeded the number of vacancies and there was adequate supply of suitable candidates to fill the positions. Furthermore, the resignation rate of civil service lifeguards has also been lower than the overall resignation rate of the civil service. Please see **Annex 2** for the relevant figures. Civil service lifeguards therefore do not meet the criterion as set out in paragraph 8(a) above.

10. As for the criterion set out in paragraph 8(b), civil service lifeguards, as all other civil servants, are required to keep their services for the public abreast of ever changing circumstances. The job nature, job complexity and level of responsibilities of all civil service grades evolve constantly, having regard to policy initiatives, changes in attitudes and expectations of the community, technological advancement, etc. While these developments may give rise to increase of workload for the civil service, including lifeguards, it is considered that there have been no fundamental changes to the job nature, job complexity and level of responsibilities of civil service lifeguards. Civil service lifeguards therefore do not meet the second criterion for having a grade structure review.

Human Resources Policies and Management Practice regarding Lifeguards

11. The safety of swimmers and players of water sports centres has 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 six years, an additional \$16.8 million was allocated annually in the past six years to create over 200 lifeguard places by phases for employment of NCSC seasonal lifeguards for existing swimming pools and beaches to augment the lifeguard services at these venues.

12. Where justified, LCSD will propose the creation of additional civil service lifeguard posts in accordance with the established procedures. In fact, the total number of civil service lifeguards has steadily increased by 35% from 893 in 2011 to 1 209 in 2018. The actual numbers of civil service lifeguards for the years 2011 to 2018 are at **Annex 3**.

13. 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:

Pay Level

- (a) To maintain the attractiveness of the pay of seasonal lifeguards, LCSD adheres to the principle of keeping the pay of seasonal lifeguards broadly comparable with that of their private sector counterparts. To this end, starting from 2004, reference has been made to the local private employment market in terms of pay level of lifeguards and other important relevant factors, including LCSD's fiscal position and the Composite Consumer Price Index, etc. in determining the annual pay adjustment for seasonal lifeguards. LCSD has recently completed the pay review for seasonal lifeguards and decided to increase their pay by 8% for the 2019 swimming season. The monthly salary of seasonal lifeguards for swimming pools/water sports centres for the 2019 swimming season has been adjusted upwards to \$17,345. Besides, in order to attract more qualified persons to work as seasonal lifeguards at beaches, those who work at beaches in Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun Districts will receive a monthly salary of \$18,045, \$700 more than those for swimming pools/water sports centres. Seasonal lifeguards for more remote beaches in Sai Kung, Southern District and the Outlying Islands will receive a monthly salary of \$18,345, \$1,000 more than those for swimming pools/water sports centres;
- (b) To encourage former full-time seasonal lifeguards to continue working in LCSD so as to ensure the steady supply of manpower, full-time seasonal lifeguards who have served in LCSD for at least six months in the 2018 swimming season and who have satisfactorily completed one single contract of six months or more in the 2019 swimming season (who have behaved and performed satisfactorily

during the contract period) will be offered a 15% end-of-contract gratuity for the whole contract period. (Formerly, seasonal lifeguards on satisfactory completion of the initial three-month contract would be offered a 10% end-of-contract gratuity and a 15% end-of-contract gratuity would be payable for lifeguard services starting from the ensuing fourth month);

- (c) To offer an additional monthly payment of \$300 to seasonal lifeguards who have obtained a valid first aid certificate and completed a contract of employment for a specified period so as to attract holders of a valid first aid certificate to become seasonal lifeguards and encourage seasonal lifeguards to enhance their skills.

Streamlined Procedures and Enhanced Publicity

- (d) To streamline the recruitment process and expedite the lifeguard supply chain by inviting full-time seasonal lifeguards to continue to serve on a part-time basis upon completion of their contracts;
- (e) To organise more recruitment exercises in various districts so as to attract and facilitate qualified persons to apply for seasonal lifeguard posts on-the-spot;
- (f) Publicity efforts have been stepped up to promote recruitment exercises for seasonal lifeguards through different channels. For instance, recruitment banners have been displayed at swimming pools/beaches with higher utilisation rates in the 18 districts. Recruitment information has been released via the websites of different organisations concerned. Recruitment advertisements have been placed in more popular newspapers and social media web sites to reach out to a wider spectrum of people. Besides, recruitment pamphlets have also been published and distributed to secondary schools/tertiary institutions/organisations concerned;
- (g) Booths had been set up in the Education & Careers Expo 2018 where briefing sessions and guided tours were provided to brief students and job seekers directly on the duties of seasonal lifeguards and details of other training programmes for lifeguards, etc.

Expanded Recruitment Channels

- (h) To continue recruiting eligible retired civil service lifeguards or retiring civil service lifeguards on pre-retirement leave under the Post-retirement Service Contract (PRSC) Scheme as seasonal lifeguards;
- (i) To implement the Beach/Swimming Pool Trainee Scheme to provide vocational training to youths aged 16-24 so as to facilitate them to become professional beach/swimming pool lifeguards;
- (j) To launch the beach seasonal lifeguard training programmes integrating training, internship and recruitment; and
- (k) To liaise with schools and relevant organisations to explore collaborative efforts and encourage them to organise lifesaving training programmes with an aim of increasing lifeguard manpower supply in the long run.

Continued Communication with Staff Members

14. LCSD all along maintains close contact and regular dialogues with civil service lifeguards and union representatives through different channels, including 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 civil service lifeguards and the unions, to exchange views with them on operational and staff issues and take appropriate follow-up action whenever necessary.

Advice Sought

15. Members are invited to note this paper.

**Leisure and Cultural Services Department
December 2018**

**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) Lifesaving duties;
- (b) First aid duties;
- (c) Assisting in law enforcement and maintenance of order;
- (d) Patrolling water sports activities areas on rescue boat and watching over participants of water sports activities;
- (e) Directing participants to get 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;
- (f) Assisting in issuing and collecting water sports equipment/gear and assuring that they are in good condition before and after use;
- (g) Cleansing and minor repairs and maintenance of water sports equipment;
- (h) Assisting in cleansing work; and
- (i) 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 work 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 laws/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) Performing janitor duty and maintenance of order and law enforcement where applicable;
- (j) Ensuring the motor rescue boats are used and kept properly;
- (k) Assisting users of water sports centres to use the crafts properly; and
- (l) Inspecting lifesaving and first aid equipment regularly and ensuring that they are adequate and serviceable at all times.

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 for the Past Five to Eight Years

(a) Recruitment^(Note 1)

(i) B/SP Stream of the Artisan Grade

Year	Applications received ^(Note 2)	Offers made and accepted
2017 - 18	-	56
2016 - 17	-	79
2015 - 16	768	60
2014 - 15	-	46
2013 - 14	1 103	53

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

Year	Applications received ^(Note 2)	Offers made and accepted
2017 - 18	-	17
2016 - 17	-	17
2015 - 16	-	13
2014 - 15	245	11
2013 - 14	-	10
2012 - 13	-	16
2011 - 12	-	29
2010 - 11	233 ^(Note3)	-

(iii) LGWSC Stream of the Artisan Grade

Year	Applications received ^(Note 2)	Offers made and accepted
2017 - 18	96	5
2016 - 17	-	7
2015 - 16	-	2
2014 - 15	-	12
2013 - 14	110	2

Note:

1. No recruitment exercise for LGWSC stream of the Senior Artisan Grade was conducted in the past eight years. A new round of recruitment exercise was launched in July 2018 and offers of appointment are expected to be made in January 2019.
2. Applications received refer to the total number of applications received after the launch of the recruitment exercise in that year. Upon completion of the recruitment exercise, the LCSD offered appointment to successful candidates based on the vacancy situation in the same or subsequent year until a new round of recruitment exercise was launched.
3. The recruitment exercise was launched in March 2011.

(b) Retention

Rank	Annual figures of resignees				
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Artisan (B/SP)	4	1	2	6	5
Senior Artisan (B/SP)	0	0	0	0	0
Artisan (Water Sports Centre)	0	0	0	0	0
Senior Artisan (Water Sports Centre)	0	0	0	0	0
Total	4	1	2	6	5
Percentage to the total establishment of the above rank (%)	0.37	0.09	0.17	0.51	0.41

**Number of Civil Service Lifeguards in
the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in 2011-2018**

Grade	Year*								2018 vs 2011	
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	No.	%
Senior Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool)	126	152	163	158	163	161	170	173	+47	+37.3%
Senior Artisan (Water Sports Centre)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	-2 [#]	-66.7%
Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool)	755	847	947	942	981	979	1 011	1 013	+258	+34.2%
Artisan (Water Sports Centre)	9	8	8	9	19	19	20	22	+13	+144.4%
Total	893	1 010	1 121	1 112	1 166	1 162	1 204	1 209	+316	+35.4%

Note

* As at 1 August of each year

A new round of recruitment exercise for Senior Artisan (Water Sports Centre) has been launched and offers of appointment are expected to be made in January 2019 to fill the vacancies.