

Management of Public Swimming Pools

Purpose

This paper is to brief members on the existing opening arrangements and booking procedures for use of public swimming pools managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD).

Background

2. LCSD manages 36 public swimming pools in 18 districts. Of these 36 pools, 14 of them are provided with heated pool facilities (six are indoor and eight outdoor). These swimming pools cater for both casual use by members of the public and organized use by group users. To ensure a fair allocation of pool facilities among different users, to balance their competing demands and to enhance utilization, LCSD reviews regularly the opening arrangements and booking procedures to set out the priorities of different major users and the quota for individual and group uses. The existing opening arrangements and booking procedures are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Opening Arrangements

Opening Hours

3. During the period from 1 April to 31 October each year, all public swimming pools are normally opened between 6:30 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. daily. During the period from 1 November to 31 March of the following year in winter, the heated swimming pools are opened between 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. daily. The opening arrangements of the 36 public swimming pools are set out at **Annex I**.

4 The two heated pools in Sham Shui Po District, namely, the Lai Chi Kok Park Swimming Pool and the Sham Shui Po Park Swimming Pool are scheduled to open alternatively during the winter period between 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. daily. This is because one heated pool in the

Sham Shui Po District can meet the local demand.

5. The five non-heated swimming pools (including Pao Yue Kong Swimming Pool, Kennedy Town Swimming Pool, Victoria Park Swimming Pool, Kowloon Tsai Swimming Pool and Jordan Valley Swimming Pool) in the urban area remain open in November from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. daily while the other non-heated pools are closed. Recently, the Director of Audit has recommended that these swimming pools should be closed in November in view of their low attendance, with 168 being the highest daily average patronage for these five non-heated pools in November 2002 (please see **Annex II**).

6. The Director of Audit also observed that the outdoor heated pools had a daily average patronage of less than 80 in the evening session (Please see **Annex III**). The low patronage of the outdoor pools might be attributable to the cold weather in the evenings of the winter months. In order to save operating costs, the Director of Audit has recommended the Department to review the need to open outdoor heated pools in the New Territories in the evening session. We are considering this proposal and will consult the respective District Councils shortly on this recommendation.

Sessional Breaks

7. All swimming pools are opened in three sessions with two one-hour breaks daily during opening hours throughout the year, except for Lai Chi Kok Park Swimming Pool and Sham Shui Po Park Swimming Pool which are opened in two sessions in winter. The first break of all swimming pools is fixed between 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. The second sessional break of urban swimming pools varies from pool to pool between 5:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. as endorsed by respective District Councils. The second break of the public swimming pools in the New Territories is fixed between 6:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. from April to October, and between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. from November to March.

8. The purpose of maintaining two breaks in all public swimming pools is to facilitate cleansing and enable the National Sports Associations (NSAs) concerned to use the pools during the breaks to organize their training programmes.

Booking Procedures

Priority of Different Users

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

(a) Organizations

Organizations may book facilities for organized activities 12 months (for school bookings) to 2 months (for bona fide organization bookings) in advance through submitting applications to the venues concerned. The priorities of these organizations, in accordance with their contributions to the promotion of swimming are as follows –

- (i) Home Affairs Bureau and LCSD;
- (ii) Schools (during school hours);
- (iii) National Squad Training Centres for specific NSAs;
- (iv) Training Venues for NSAs and their affiliated clubs for specific period in specific swimming pools;
- (v) Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong (China), Sports Development Board, NSAs and their affiliated clubs (with endorsement by their parent NSAs), District Sports Associations, Non-governmental Organizations, and other Government Departments; and
- (vi) Bona fide organizations.

(b) Individual Users

Members of the public using swimming pools are admitted on-the-spot through turnstiles.

10. Applications from the same category of priority users are processed at the same time after the prescribed deadline for submission of applications. If the competing demand for the booking of overlapping periods cannot be resolved through mutual compromise, balloting will be used to determine the allocation.

Quota for Block Booking

11. According to the existing booking procedures for the use of public swimming pools, there are quotas for allocation of facilities to individual and group users as follows –

- (a) Bookings for the exclusive use of the entire main pool in any pool complexes are encouraged to be confined to non-peak months and periods ^(Note 1);
- (b) Not more than four swimming lanes in each pool complex may be allocated for block booking; and
- (c) Not more than half of the swimming lanes available for block bookings are allowed to be booked by one applicant at any one time.

12. Venue management may exercise discretion to relax the above quota on justifiable grounds.

Utilization Pattern

13. Based on a survey on the use of swimming lanes in the main pools of public swimming pools by different group users in 2003, the overall utilization of the lane hours available for block booking during peak hours is about 59%. However, it varies significantly from one pool to another. For example, the least utilized Kennedy Town Swimming Pool only has a utilization rate of 8%, while those popular pools including Morrison Hill, Wan Chai, Kowloon Park and Tseung Kwan O are almost fully booked with utilization rates reaching up to and over 90%.

14. As for non-peak hours, the overall utilization rate drops to about 23%. During this period, even the popular pools (i.e. Morrison Hill, Wan Chai and Kowloon Park) are only moderately used with

Note 1 Non-peak months refer to those months other than June, July and August
Non-peak periods refer to Mondays to Fridays except Public Holidays

utilization rates ranging between 40% and 50%. For those less popular pools (such as Ma On Shan and Kennedy Town), the utilization is as low as 2% and 6%.

15. NSAs and their affiliated clubs are the major users of the swimming lanes being set aside for block bookings, both during peak and non-peak hours. Out of the 59 and 23 percentage points for peak and non-peak hours, the priority users including the NSAs and their affiliated clubs have taken up 40 and 12 percentage points for the block bookings made respectively. The second major users are Government departments, including LCSD, and they have taken up about 14% and 6% of the available lanes during peak and non-peak hours respectively. Schools' bookings mainly concentrate on use during non-peak hours (5%), and their use of swimming lanes during peak hours is only 2%.

16. The above utilization patterns indicate that block bookings of swimming lanes tend to concentrate at a few conveniently located swimming pools. There is plenty of swimming facilities available in other swimming pools. Furthermore, the keen competition for swimming lanes in popular pools only occurs at the specific period between 5 pm and 8 pm.

Private Coaching Activities

17. Due to heavy demand for swimming lanes during peak hours in popular pools, coaches of some swimming clubs choose to organize their swimming classes in the swimming areas set aside for the public rather than booking for use of less popular pools. As advised by the Department of Justice, these private coaching activities do not violate our rules as stipulated in the Public Swimming Pools Regulation (Chapter 132). Nevertheless, we have tightened up supervision of these activities to guard against inconvenience, obstruction or annoyance caused to other swimmers. We have also started a trial scheme by setting aside a public coaching area at the main pool of Morrison Hill since 1 July 2003 to segregate these activities from public use. The trial scheme has so far been well received by the public.

Way Forward

18. The existing opening arrangements of public swimming

pools are generally acceptable to the public. LCSD will review the need to open the five non-heated pools in November in the urban area and the need to open the evening session of the outdoor heated pools in the New Territories.

19. The existing booking procedures are in general working well in the allocation of swimming pools except that some less popular pools have not been well utilized and have spare capacity. However, there is excessive demand for swimming lanes at a few popular pools (during the specific time from 5 pm to 8 pm). To ameliorate the situation, LCSD will liaise with the priority users with a view to coordinating their usage and diverting some of the bookings to the less popular pools so that these priority users can secure their bookings to enable them to have a long-term planning for their programmes. LCSD will also review the booking procedures on a regular basis to ensure that a fair allocation among all users is maintained.

Leisure and Cultural Services Department
31 May 2004

Opening Arrangements of Public Swimming Pools
April – October

Urban Pools

District	Venue	Opening hours	1 st sessional break	2 nd sessional break
Southern	Pao Yue Kong SP	6:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Kwun Tong	Kwun Tong SP			
	Jordan Valley SP			
Central & Western	Kennedy Town SP	6:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Wan Chai	Morrison Hill SP			
Eastern	Victoria Park SP			
	Island East SP			
	Chai Wan SP			
Yau Tsim Mong	Kowloon Park SP			
Kowloon City	Kowloon Tsai SP			
	Ho Man Tin SP			
	Tai Wan Shan SP			
Sham Shui Po	Sham Shui Po Park SP	6:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
	Lai Chi Kok Park SP			
	Lei Cheng Uk SP			
Wong Tai Sin	Hammer Hill Road SP	6:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
	Morse Park SP			
Wan Chai	Wan Chai SP	7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	N.A.	N.A.

NT Pools

District	Venue	Opening hours	1 st sessional break	2 nd sessional break
Islands	Mui Wo SP	8:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Tuen Mun	Tuen Mun SP	6:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
	JC Yan Oi Tong SP			
Yuen Long	Yuen Long SP			
	Tin Shui Wai SP			
Tsuen Wan	Tsuen King Circuit Wu Chung SP			
	Shing Mun Valley SP			
Kwai Tsing	Tsing Yi SP			
	Kwai Shing SP			
	North Kwai Chung Jockey Club SP			
North	Sheung Shui SP			
	Fanling SP			
Tai Po	Tai Po SP			
Sha Tin	Ma On Shan SP			
	Sha Tin Jockey Club SP			
	Hin Tin SP			
Sai Kung	Sai Kung SP			
	Tseung Kwan O SP			

**Opening Arrangements of Public Swimming Pools
November – March**

Urban Pools

District	Venue	Opening hours	1st sessional break	2nd sessional break
Southern	Pao Yue Kong SP [@]	6:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	N.A.
Central & Western	Kennedy Town SP [@]			
Eastern	Victoria Park SP [@]			
Kowloon City	Kowloon Tsai SP [@]			
Kwun Tong	Jordan Valley SP [@]			
Sham Shui Po	Sham Shui Po Park SP [#] (Note 1)			
	Lai Chi Kok Park SP [#] (Note 1)			
Wan Chai	Wan Chai SP [#]	7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	N.A.	N.A.
	Morrison Hill SP [*]	6:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Yau Tsim Mong	Kowloon Park SP [*]	6:30 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Eastern	Island East SP [*]	6:30 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Kowloon City	Ho Man Tin SP [*]			
Wong Tai Sin	Hammer Hill Road SP [*]	6:30 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

NT Pools

District	Venue	Opening hours	1st sessional break	2nd sessional break
Tuen Mun	Tuen Mun SP [#] (Note 1)	6:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Yuen Long	Yuen Long SP [#] (Note 1)			
North	Fanling SP [#]			
Sha Tin	Sha Tin Jockey Club SP [#]			
Sai Kung	Tseung Kwan O SP [#]			
Tsuen Wan	Shing Mun Valley SP [*]			

@ Non-heated pool which opens in November only

Outdoor Heated Pool

* Indoor Heated Pool

Note 1 These pools will be closed for maintenance alternatively in some months during the period from November to March

**Patronage of five non-heated swimming pool complexes in November
(2000 to 2002)**

Swimming Pool	Number of swimmers		
	November 2000	November 2001	November 2002
Jordan Valley Swimming Pool	1,598	1,847	1,578
Kennedy Town Swimming Pool	2,763	4,119	4,890
Kowloon Tsai Swimming Pool	3,775	5,549	4,866
Pao Yue Kong Swimming Pool	743	1,306	2,045
Victoria Park Swimming Pool	4,612	5,436	5,038

**Daily average patronage of
13 swimming pool complexes provided with heated pools
(winter months in 2002-03)**

Swimming Pool	Daily average patronage			
	Morning session	Afternoon session	Evening session	All sessions
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d) = (a)+(b)+(c)
Kowloon Park Swimming Pool	1,067	710	725	2,502
Morrison Hill Swimming Pool	874	615	471	1,960
Shing Mun Valley Swimming Pool	588	363	146	1,097
Sham Shui Po Park Swimming Pool	443	271	77	791
Sha Tin Jockey Club Swimming Pool	290	257	58	605
Fanling Swimming Pool	254	273	51	578
Yuen Long Swimming Pool	214	196	149	559
Lai Chi Kok Park Swimming Pool	298	179	58	535
Hammer Hill Road Swimming Pool	257	146	63	466
Tuen Mun Swimming Pool	155	236	47	438
Tseung Kwan O Swimming Pool	176	167	42	385
Island East Swimming Pool	182	95	69	346
Ho Man Tin Swimming Pool	108	61	40	209
Total	<u>4 906</u>	<u>3 569</u>	<u>1 996</u>	<u>10 471</u>