

Guidance Notes to Applications for Permission to Use the Central Government Offices Compound for Public Meetings/Processions

The Central Government Offices (CGO) complex is government property and the land on which it occupies has been allocated to the Director of Administration, who is required to manage the area and premises in a safe, clean and proper manner. The CGO complex is not a public place and access to it is permitted only with the prior consent of the Director of Administration.

2. The Administration recognizes and accepts the need to facilitate public expression of opinions at the CGO whilst maintaining the orderly and effective operation of the CGO. To strike a balance between these considerations, the Director of Administration has, upon the advice from the Commissioner of Police, designated an area at the CGO West Gate near Battery Path as a public activity area for individuals and groups to stage petitions or demonstrations. Requests to enter the CGO compound for public meetings or processions on working days are not allowed to prevent disturbance to the offices located there. This also applies to working Saturdays in that public activities to be held in the afternoon will not be allowed should offices in the CGO be in operation.

3. Furthermore, special arrangements have been put in place for Executive Council meetings held on Tuesday mornings. In general, interested groups and individuals, whilst using the public activity area at the CGO West Gate, may be allowed to send representatives to go into the designated area outside the main entrance of the CGO Main Wing to voice their opinions or hand in petition letters directly to Executive Council Members. Such special arrangements are made subject to the interested groups' or individuals' compliance with the direction given by the duty officer on the spot, and each interested group would normally be allowed to field two representatives.

4. Requests to enter the CGO compound for public meetings or processions on non-working days, i.e. Sundays and public holidays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., will be accommodated where possible.

Application procedures

5. Under the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245), a public meeting of more than 50 persons and a public procession of more than 30 persons must be notified to the Commissioner of Police. Interested groups who intend to hold public meetings of more than 50 persons, or public processions of more than 30 persons, inside the CGO compound are required to notify the Commissioner in accordance with the Ordinance.

6. Save for the special arrangements during meetings of the Executive Council on Tuesday mornings (see paragraph 3 above), access to the CGO compound is permitted only with the prior consent of the Director of Administration. For requests to hold a public meeting or a public procession inside the CGO compound, irrespective of the number of persons involved, the Director of Administration should be approached direct using the relevant application form. The duly completed application form can be forwarded to the Director of Administration by fax, by hand, or by post, and should reach the Director of Administration at least two clear working days prior to the event. The Director of Administration will notify the applicant of the result within these two clear working days.

7. Any request to enter the CGO compound to express or voice opinions, or conduct public activities will be handled as follows:

- (a) the Director of Administration will seek advice from the Police as to potential threat to public order and public safety which may arise should such request be granted;
- (b) in providing such advice, the Police will take into consideration the size, nature and objectives of the intended activity; similar events taking place in the vicinity; the past history of public events arranged by the same organizer/organization; and the sentiments and number of participants, etc; and
- (c) once the Director of Administration gives permission for access to specified areas within the CGO compound, the areas will become public places under the Public Order Ordinance during the specified hours.

8. Copies of this guidance notes and application form can be obtained by calling 2810 2009 or downloaded from the Administration Wing's website at http://www.admwing.gov.hk/eng/public_service/pservices.htm

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