

PAYMENT OF GOVERNMENT RENT

Notice is hereby given that Government rent in excess of \$100 per annum for the half year ending 25 December 2019 in respect of properties subject to the Government Leases Ordinance (Chapter 45) and certain other properties is due on 25 December 2019.

Demand Notes in respect of Government rent have been issued by the Lands Department. Members of the public may pay through various electronic means such as Autopay, Bank Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), e-Cheque/e-Cashier's Order, Payment by Phone Service (PPS), bill payment services provided by banks and PPS on the internet (please visit the Treasury's website: <http://www.try.gov.hk>). Payment may also be made by a crossed cheque payable to 'The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region' or 'The Government of the HKSAR'. All crossed cheques should be sent to P.O. Box No. 28000, Gloucester Road Post Office, Hong Kong, or in person at any post offices. Please ensure sufficient mailing time and postage to make delivery in order. Underpaid mail will be rejected. For locations of post offices and their opening hours, please call Hongkong Post's enquiry hotline on 2921 2222 or visit Hongkong Post's website: <http://www.hongkongpost.hk>. Payment may be made in person and in cash at designated convenience stores. (For details, please visit the Treasury's website: (http://www.try.gov.hk/internet/ehcoll_paym_convenstore.html))

Government rent payers who have not received their demand notes should enquire at the Government Rent and Premium Unit of the Lands Department at 1st Floor, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong (Tel: 2231 3033). Non-receipt of the demand note does not alter the requirement that the Government rent must be paid on or before 25 December 2019.

Government rent payers who have submitted a valid direct debit authorization should note that if the wording 'Payment To Be Made By Autopay' is shown on the demand notes, payment of Government rent will be made by direct debit from their bank accounts on the next working day following 25 December 2019. They should therefore ensure that their bank accounts contain the necessary funds on that date. If the above wording is not shown on the demand notes, Government rent payers should make payment by other payment methods as stipulated in the demand notes.

Government rent payers are reminded that unless payment is made by 15 January 2020, legal action for recovery or re-entry may be instituted without further notice in accordance with the conditions of the leases or land grant.

Government rent payers should note the following points:—

- (a) to avoid legal action for re-entry of a property, the owner for the time being of that property is obliged to pay Government rent including any arrears as demanded;
- (b) the Government rent payable under a lease of a property which has been renewed under the Government Leases Ordinance and re-developed, will be 3% of the rateable value of that property as assessed following the redevelopment. Pending completion of the assessment and other related procedures, Government rent demands will be based upon the pre-redevelopment rateable value. In due course, Government rent for the difference between the rent based upon pre- and post- redevelopment rateable values will be demanded and the owner for the time being is obliged to pay the rent as demanded. If he does not, legal action for re-entry of the property may be instituted;
- (c) demand or acceptance of Government rent in respect of any property with unauthorized structures does not imply in any way that the unauthorized structures are authorized or otherwise recognized by Government. Government expressly reserves the right to take whatever action in respect of such unauthorized structures it considers appropriate, including demolition or removal of the structures or re-entry of the property; and
- (d) in the case where the property or part thereof is resumed by or surrendered to Government, the demand or acceptance of Government rent is not to be regarded in any way as giving authority to the occupation of the property or conferring by Government of any legal rights or interests of the property in the occupier.

Purchasers of properties are strongly advised to instruct their solicitors to ensure that at the time of purchase the Government rent is paid up to date. If a property is subject to the Government Leases Ordinance and has been re-developed but the rent paid up to the date of the purchase is not based upon an assessment of the rateable value of the property since its redevelopment, appropriate steps should be taken by the purchaser or his solicitors to protect the purchaser's interest.

Enquiries on outstanding accounts in respect of the above-mentioned Government rent can be made at 2231 3033 or email to (landsd@landsd.gov.hk). If a written confirmation of accounts position is needed, an enquiry fee is payable for each enquiry per property.

29 November 2019

John LAI Assistant Director (*Specialist 1*), Lands Department