

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**“Anti-Epidemic Hygiene Measures Certification Scheme”
Showcase industries’ hygiene commitment,
Enhance public confidence**

(8 October 2020, Hong Kong) Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency (HKQAA) is pleased to announce the launch of its “Anti-Epidemic Hygiene Measures Certification Scheme”. The Scheme will raise awareness of epidemic prevention and promote the use of standardised hygiene measures. HKQAA will partner with the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) in the first phase to encourage tourism-related businesses to participate in the Scheme. The aim is to strengthen public and visitor confidence in out-of-home consumption and travel.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching consequences, and organisations from different sectors are moving forward to a new normal. Consumers, employees, travellers, and other stakeholders are more concerned about public health and safety than ever before. HKQAA has responded to the situation by developing the “Anti-Epidemic Hygiene Measures Certification Scheme”. The Agency’s extensive experience and expertise means that the Scheme is well placed to help organisations cope with the many challenges posed by the current health crisis.

Hong Kong Tourism Board covers the application fee for industry partners joining the Scheme

The Scheme is an enhanced version of the “Hygiene Measures for CoV Prevention Certification Scheme”, developed by HKQAA in March 2020. It will cover different sectors and accept applications in stages. Six tourism-related sectors including shopping malls, hotels, attractions, inbound tour operators, and restaurants and retail outlets under the Quality Tourism Services (QTS) Scheme can join the Scheme first. The scheme will extend to cover cross-boundary coach companies, tour coach companies, MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition) venues, and other retail and dining merchants, etc. To further support the industry through difficult times, the HKTB will fully sponsor the application fee for applicable businesses that join the Scheme.

Ir C S Ho, Chairman of the HKQAA, said, “We aim to combat COVID-19 and promote good hygiene practices in tourism-related industries through professional and impartial third-party certification. We will showcase the efforts and commitment of the industry, and restore public confidence in out-of-home consumption and travel. It is our honour to partner with the Hong Kong Tourism Board to drive enhanced performance and establish a new culture of good hygiene practices under the new normal.”

Dr Y K Pang, Chairman of the HKTB said, “The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a new normal to the tourism landscape, and public health and safety have become a priority for visitors. Many international travel and tourism organisations have already

put in place hygiene and anti-epidemic guidelines, and standardising hygiene measures for each sector can spread to visitors the message that different sectors across Hong Kong value their commitment to hygiene and safety. I am excited that more than 1,800 businesses and outlets expressed interest in the protocol when the HKTb consulted our trade partners. The HKTb will strengthen its promotion of anti-epidemic measures taken by the tourism industry and related sectors to establish a healthy and safe tourism image for Hong Kong and to bolster visitors' confidence in travelling to Hong Kong.”

Drive continuous improvement

HKQAA has developed the Scheme with standardised assessment criteria which reference the Hong Kong Centre for Health Protection's guidelines. Certified organisations are required to implement ten hygiene and anti-epidemic measures, such as disinfecting commonly touched surfaces like hotel elevator buttons at least every two hours during day time, and cleaning carpets, curtains and furnishings regularly. In shopping malls, public areas need to be cleaned at least twice a day, air-conditioners and ventilation system must be cleaned regularly to maintain good ventilation.

Organisations are entitled to display the certification mark at their certified sites, which will help tourists and consumers to make a wise choice. Members of the public can simply scan the QR code displayed at the site or visit the Scheme's website to view the related certification information and the ten hygiene measures that have been implemented by the certified organisation.

In addition, certified organisations will obtain an industry benchmarking report from HKQAA. This will enable them to learn from the good practices adopted by others, and so continuously improve their hygiene performance to combat the virus.

The Scheme is accepting applications from 8 October. Details are available at the <https://hkhygiene.hkqaa.org>

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HKQAA Background

HKQAA is a non-profit organisation established by the Hong Kong Government in 1989. As one of the leading conformity organisations in the region, HKQAA is committed to providing certification and assessment services for industry. Through knowledge sharing and technology transfer, HKQAA helps enterprises enhance management performance and competitiveness. In addition to introducing world-class management systems, HKQAA has launched a wide range of innovative services to cope with increasingly diversified market demands, bringing benefits to the community.

After the outbreak of "SARS" more than a decade ago, society was encouraged to pay more attention to public health. HKQAA took the lead in developing the HKQAA - Hygiene Control System Certification Scheme to promote a new culture of hygiene practices. In 2006, HKQAA provided the ISO 13485 Medical Devices Quality Management System certification service to support the medical device industry in its efforts to improve professional standards. Since the beginning of the spread of COVID-19, at the end of December 2019, HKQAA has paid close attention to the situation. To support the community in the fight against this virus, we have launched the "Medical Face Masks Product Certification Scheme", the "Community Health Ambassador" Personnel Registration, "COVID-19 Resilience Finance Certification Scheme" and among others so far this year.

Please visit <http://www.hkqaa.org> for further information.