

PERSONAL DATA (PRIVACY) ORDINANCE

Chapter 486

Long title

An Ordinance to protect the privacy of individuals in relation to personal data, and to provide for matters incidental thereto or connected therewith.

(Enacted 1995)

[Part II, section 71 (as affects Schedule 2) and Schedule 2]	1 August 1996	<i>L.N. 343 of 1996</i>
The other provisions, excluding sections 30 and 33	20 December 1996	<i>L.N. 514 of 1996</i>
Section 30	1 August 1997	<i>L.N. 409 of 1997</i>]

(Originally 81 of 1995)

PART I PRELIMINARY

Section 1

Short title and commencement

(1) This Ordinance may be cited as the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.

(2) This Ordinance shall come into operation on a day to be appointed by the Secretary for Home Affairs by notice in the Gazette.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 2 Interpretation

(1) In this Ordinance, unless the context otherwise requires-

“act” includes a deliberate omission;

“adverse action”, in relation to an individual, means any action that may adversely affect the individual’s rights, benefits, privileges, obligations or interests (including legitimate expectations);

“appointed day” means the day appointed under [section 1\(2\)](#);

“approved code of practice” means a code of practice approved under [section 12](#);

“code of practice” includes-

- (a) a standard;
- (b) a specification; and
- (c) any other documentary form of practical guidance;

“Commissioner” means the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data established under [section 5\(1\)](#);

“Committee” means the Personal Data (Privacy) Advisory Committee established under [section 11\(1\)](#);

“complainant” means the individual, or the relevant person on behalf of an individual, who has made a complaint;

“complaint” means a complaint under [section 37](#);

“correction”, in relation to personal data, means rectification, erasure or completion;

“daily penalty” means a penalty for each day on which the offence is continued after conviction therefor;

“data” means any representation of information (including an expression of opinion) in any document, and includes a personal identifier;

“data access request” means a request under [section 18](#);

“data correction request” means a request under [section 22\(1\)](#);

“data protection principle” means any of the data protection principles set out in Schedule 1;

“data subject”, in relation to personal data, means the individual who is the subject of the data;

“data user”, in relation to personal data, means a person who, either alone or jointly or in common with other persons, controls the collection, holding, processing or use of the data;

“data user return” means a data user return referred to in [section 14\(4\)](#);

“disclosing”, in relation to personal data, includes disclosing information inferred from the data;

“document” includes, in addition to a document in writing-

- (a) a disc, tape or other device in which data other than visual images are embodied so as to be capable, with or without the aid of some other equipment, of being reproduced from the disc, tape or other device; and
- (b) a film, tape or other device in which visual images are embodied so as to be capable, with or without the aid of some other equipment, of being reproduced from the film, tape or other device;

“employment” means employment under-

- (a) a contract of service or of apprenticeship; or
- (b) a contract personally to execute any work or labour;

and related expressions shall be construed accordingly;

“enforcement notice” means a notice under [section 50\(1\)](#);

“financial regulator” means any of-

- (a) the Monetary Authority appointed under [section 5A](#) of the Exchange Fund Ordinance (Cap 66);
- (b) the Securities and Futures Commission established by [section 3](#) of the Securities and Futures Commission Ordinance (Cap 24);

- (c) a clearing house within the meaning of [section 2\(1\)](#) of the Commodities Trading Ordinance (Cap 250) or a recognized clearing house within the meaning of the Securities and Futures (Clearing Houses) Ordinance (Cap 420);
- (d) the Exchange Company within the meaning of [section 2\(1\)](#) of the Commodities Trading Ordinance (Cap 250);
- (e) the Exchange Company within the meaning of [section 2\(1\)](#) of the Stock Exchanges Unification Ordinance (Cap 361);
- (f) the Insurance Authority appointed under [section 4](#) of the Insurance Companies Ordinance (Cap 41);
- (g) the Registrar of Occupational Retirement Schemes appointed under [section 5](#) of the Occupational Retirement Schemes Ordinance (Cap 426);
- (ga) the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority established by [section 6](#) of the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Ordinance (Cap 485); (Added 4 of 1998 s. 14)
- (h) a person specified in a notice under [subsection \(7\)](#) to be a regulator for the purposes of this definition;

“inaccurate”, in relation to personal data, means the data is incorrect, misleading, incomplete or obsolete;

“inspection” means an inspection under [section 36](#);

“investigation” means an investigation under [section 38](#);

“log book”, in relation to a data user, means the log book kept and maintained by the data user under [section 27\(1\)](#);

“matching procedure” means any procedure whereby personal data collected for 1 or more purposes in respect of 10 or more data subjects are compared (except by manual means) with personal data collected for any other purpose in respect of those data subjects where the comparison-

- (a) is (whether in whole or in part) for the purpose of producing or verifying data that; or
- (b) produces or verifies data in respect of which it is reasonable to believe that it is practicable that the data,

may be used (whether immediately or at any subsequent time) for the purpose of taking adverse action against any of those data subjects;

“matching procedure request” means a request under [section 31\(1\)](#);

“personal data” means any data-

- (a) relating directly or indirectly to a living individual;
- (b) from which it is practicable for the identity of the individual to be directly or indirectly ascertained; and
- (c) in a form in which access to or processing of the data is practicable;

“personal data system” means any system, whether or not automated, which is used, whether in whole or in part, by a data user for the collection, holding, processing or use of personal data, and includes any document and equipment forming part of the system;

“personal identifier” means an identifier-

- (a) that is assigned to an individual by a data user for the purpose of the operations of the user; and
- (b) that uniquely identifies that individual in relation to the data user, but does not include an individual's name used to identify that individual;

“practicable” means reasonably practicable;

“prescribed officer” means a person employed or engaged under [section 9\(1\)](#);

“processing”, in relation to personal data, includes amending, augmenting, deleting or rearranging the data, whether by automated means or otherwise;

“register” means the register of data users kept and maintained by the Commissioner under [section 15\(1\)](#);

“relevant data user”, in relation to-

- (a) an inspection, means the data user who uses the personal data system which is the subject of the inspection;
- (b) a complaint, means the data user specified in the complaint;
- (c) an investigation-
 - (i) in the case of an investigation initiated by a complaint, means the data user specified in the complaint;
 - (ii) in any other case, means the data user the subject of the investigation;
- (d) an enforcement notice, means the data user on whom the notice is served;

“relevant person”, in relation to an individual (howsoever the individual is described), means-

- (a) where the individual is a minor, a person who has parental responsibility for the minor;
- (b) where the individual is incapable of managing his own affairs, a person who has been appointed by a court to manage those affairs;
- (c) in any other case, a person authorized in writing by the individual to make a data access request, a data correction request, or both such requests, on behalf of the individual;

“requestor”, in relation to-

- (a) a data access request or data correction request, means the individual, or the relevant person on behalf of an individual, who has made the request;
- (b) a matching procedure request, means the data user who has made the request;

“specified”, in relation to a form, means specified under [section 67](#);

“third party”, in relation to personal data, means any person other than-

- (a) the data subject;
- (b) a relevant person in the case of the data subject;
- (c) the data user; or
- (d) a person authorized in writing by the data user to collect, hold, process or use the data-
 - (i) under the direct control of the data user; or
 - (ii) on behalf of the data user;

“use”, in relation to personal data, includes disclose or transfer the data;

“would be likely to prejudice” includes would prejudice.

(2) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that [paragraph \(c\)](#) of the definition of “relevant person” shall not be construed-

- (a) to entitle a person who has only been authorized to make a data access request on behalf of an individual to make a data correction request on behalf of the individual;
- (b) to entitle a person who has only been authorized to make a data correction request on behalf of an individual to make a data access request on behalf of the individual.

(3) Where under this Ordinance an act may be done with the prescribed consent of a person (and howsoever the person is described), such consent-

- (a) means the express consent of the person given voluntarily;
- (b) does not include any consent which has been withdrawn by notice in writing served on the person to whom the consent has been given (but without prejudice to so much of that act that has been done pursuant to the consent at any time before the notice is so served).

(4) Subject to [section 64\(10\)](#), it is hereby declared that any reference in this Ordinance to the effect that a data user (howsoever described)-

- (a) has contravened a requirement under this Ordinance; or
- (b) is contravening a requirement under this Ordinance, includes-
 - (i) where [paragraph \(a\)](#) is applicable, any case where the data user has done an act, or engaged in a practice, in contravention of a data protection principle;
 - (ii) where [paragraph \(b\)](#) is applicable, any case where the data user is doing an act, or engaging in a practice, in contravention of a data protection principle.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Ordinance, a complaint may be made (and an investigation, if any, initiated by the complaint may be carried out) in relation to a person who has ceased to be a data user except any such person who has not at any time been a data user during the period of 2 years immediately preceding the date on which the Commissioner receives the complaint and, accordingly, a person in relation to whom such a complaint is made shall for the purposes of such complaint (and an investigation, if any, initiated by such complaint) be deemed to be a data user, and the other provisions of this Ordinance shall be construed accordingly.

(6) Any reference in this Ordinance to a data protection principle followed by a number is a reference to the principle bearing that number set out in Schedule 1.

(7) The Chief Executive may, by notice in the Gazette, specify a person to be a regulator for the purposes of the definition of “financial regulator”. (Amended 34 of 1999 s. 3)

(8) It is hereby declared that a notice under [subsection \(7\)](#) is subsidiary legislation.

(9) Where a person-

- (a) holds any office, engages in any profession or carries on any occupation; and
- (b) is required by any law, or by any rules made under or by virtue of any law, to be a fit and proper person (or words to the like effect) to hold that office, engage in that profession or carry on that occupation,

then, for the purposes of this Ordinance, any conduct by that person by virtue of which he ceases, or would cease, to be such a fit and proper person shall be deemed to be seriously improper conduct.

(10) [Subsection \(9\)](#) shall not operate to prevent seriously improper conduct including, for the purposes of this Ordinance, conduct by virtue of which a person ceases, or would cease, to be a fit and proper person notwithstanding that the conduct is not conduct to which that subsection applies.

(11) Words and expressions importing the neuter gender in relation to any data user shall include the masculine and feminine genders.

(12) A person is not a data user in relation to any personal data which the person holds, processes or uses solely on behalf of another person if, but only if, that first-mentioned person does not hold, process or use, as the case may be, those data for any of his own purposes.

(13) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that, for the purposes of this Ordinance, any conduct by a person by virtue of which he has or could become a disqualified person or a suspended person under the Rules of Racing and Instructions by the Stewards of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, as in force from time to time, is seriously improper conduct. (Amended 34 of 1999 s. 3)

(Enacted 1995)

Section 3 Application

- (1) This Ordinance binds the Government.
- (2) (* Not adopted as the laws of HKSAR)

(Enacted 1995)

Section 4 Data protection principles

A data user shall not do an act, or engage in a practice, that contravenes a data protection principle unless the act or practice, as the case may be, is required or permitted under this Ordinance.

(Enacted 1995)

PART II ADMINISTRATION

Section 5 Establishment, etc. of Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data

* See Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Treatment of the Laws Previously in Force in Hong Kong in accordance with [Article 160](#) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, which is published in volume 1, p. 11/1.

Remarks:

Adaptation amendments retroactively made—see 34 of 1999 s. 3

(1) For the purposes of this Ordinance, there is hereby established an office by the name of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data.

(2) The Commissioner shall be a corporation sole with perpetual succession and-

- (a) shall have and may use a seal; and
- (b) shall be capable of suing and being sued.

(3) The Chief Executive shall, by notice in the Gazette, appoint a person to be the Commissioner. (Amended 34 of 1999 s. 3)

(4) Subject to [subsection \(5\)](#), the person appointed to be the Commissioner shall hold office for a period of 5 years and shall be eligible for reappointment for not more than 1 further period of 5 years.

(5) The person appointed to be the Commissioner may-

- (a) at any time resign from his office by notice in writing to the Chief Executive; or
- (b) be removed from office by the Chief Executive with the approval by resolution of the Legislative Council on the ground of-
 - (i) inability to perform the functions of his office; or
 - (ii) misbehaviour. (Amended 34 of 1999 s. 3)

(6) The Chief Executive shall determine- (Amended 34 of 1999 s. 3)

- (a) the emoluments; and
- (b) the terms and conditions of appointment,

of the person appointed to be the Commissioner.

(7) The provisions of Schedule 2 shall have effect with respect to the Commissioner.

(8) Subject to [subsection \(9\)](#), the Commissioner shall not be regarded as a servant or agent of the Government or as enjoying any status, immunity or privilege of the Government.

(9) The person appointed to be the Commissioner shall be deemed to be a public servant-

- (a) within the meaning of [section 2](#) of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap 201); and
- (b) for the purposes of that Ordinance.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 6 Commissioner to hold no other office

Remarks:

Adaptation amendments retroactively made—see 34 of 1999 s. 3

The person appointed to be the Commissioner shall not, without the specific approval of the Chief Executive- (Amended 34 of 1999 s. 3)

- (a) hold any office of profit other than his office as Commissioner; or
- (b) engage in any occupation for reward outside the functions of his office.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 7 Filling of temporary vacancy

Remarks:

Adaptation amendments retroactively made—see 34 of 1999 s. 3

- (1) Where the person appointed to be the Commissioner-
 - (a) dies;
 - (b) resigns;
 - (c) is removed from office;
 - (d) is absent from Hong Kong; or
 - (e) is for any other reason unable to perform the functions of his office,

then the Chief Executive may, by notice in writing, appoint a person to act as the Commissioner until, as the case requires- (Amended 34 of 1999 s. 3)

- (i) a new Commissioner is appointed under [section 5\(3\)](#); or
- (ii) the Commissioner resumes his office.

(2) A person appointed under [subsection \(1\)](#) to act as the Commissioner, whilst he is so appointed-

- (a) shall perform the functions; and
- (b) may exercise the powers,

of the Commissioner under this Ordinance.

(3) [Section 6](#) shall apply to a person appointed under [subsection \(1\)](#) to act as the Commissioner as if that person were the Commissioner.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 8 Functions and powers of Commissioner

Remarks:

Adaptation amendments retroactively made—see 34 of 1999 s. 3

- (1) The Commissioner shall-
 - (a) monitor and supervise compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance;

- (b) promote and assist bodies representing data users to prepare, for the purposes of [section 12](#), codes of practice for guidance in complying with the provisions of this Ordinance, in particular the data protection principles;
- (c) promote awareness and understanding of, and compliance with, the provisions of this Ordinance, in particular the data protection principles;
- (d) examine any proposed legislation (including subsidiary legislation) that the Commissioner considers may affect the privacy of individuals in relation to personal data and report the results of the examination to the person proposing the legislation;
- (e) carry out inspections, including inspections of any personal data systems used by data users which are departments of the Government or statutory corporations;
- (f) for the better performance of his other functions, undertake research into, and monitor developments in, the processing of data and computer technology in order to take account of any likely adverse effects such developments may have on the privacy of individuals in relation to personal data;
- (g) liaise and co-operate with any person in any place outside Hong Kong-
 - (i) performing in that place any functions which, in the opinion of the Commissioner, are similar (whether in whole or in part) to any of the Commissioner's functions under this Ordinance; and
 - (ii) in respect of matters of mutual interest concerning the privacy of individuals in relation to personal data; and
- (h) perform such other functions as are imposed on him under this Ordinance or any other enactment.

(2) The Commissioner may do all such things as are necessary for, or incidental or conducive to, the better performance of his functions and in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, may-

- (a) acquire and hold property of any description if in the opinion of the Commissioner such property is necessary for-
 - (i) the accommodation of the Commissioner or of any prescribed officer; or
 - (ii) the performance of any function which the Commissioner may perform, and, subject to the terms and conditions upon which such property is held, dispose of it;
- (b) enter into, carry out, assign or accept the assignment of, vary or rescind, any contract, agreement or other obligation;
- (c) undertake and execute any lawful trust which has as an object the furtherance of any function which the Commissioner is required or is permitted by this Ordinance to perform or any other similar object;
- (d) accept gifts and donations, whether subject to any trust or not;
- (e) with the prior approval of the Chief Executive, become a member of or affiliate to any international body concerned with (whether in whole or in part) the privacy of individuals in relation to personal data; (Amended 34 of 1999 s. 3)
- (f) exercise such other powers as are conferred on him under this Ordinance or any other enactment.

(3) The Commissioner may make and execute any document in the performance of his functions or the exercise of his powers or in connection with any matter reasonably incidental to or consequential upon the performance of his functions or the exercise of his powers.

(4) Any document purporting to be executed under the seal of the Commissioner shall be admitted in evidence and shall, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, be deemed to have been duly executed.

(5) The Commissioner may from time to time cause to be prepared and published by notice in the Gazette, for the guidance of data users, guidelines not inconsistent with this Ordinance, indicating the manner in which he proposes to perform any of his functions, or exercise any of his powers, under this Ordinance.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 9 Staff of Commissioner, etc.

(1) The Commissioner may-

- (a) employ such persons (including technical and professional persons); and
- (b) engage, other than by way of employment, such technical and professional persons, as he thinks fit to assist him in the performance of his functions, and the exercise of his powers, under this Ordinance.

(2) The Commissioner shall determine-

- (a) the remuneration and terms and conditions of employment of any person, or any person belonging to a class of persons, who may be employed under [subsection \(1\)\(a\)](#);
- (b) the remuneration and terms and conditions of engagement of any person, or any person belonging to a class of persons, who may be engaged under [subsection \(1\)\(b\)](#).

(3) The Commissioner may-

- (a) grant, or make provision for the grant of, pensions, gratuities and retirement benefits to employees;
- (b) provide other benefits for the welfare of employees and their dependants;
- (c) authorize payments, whether or not legally due, to the personal representatives of a deceased employee or to any person who was dependent on such employee at his death.

(4) The Commissioner may-

- (a) establish, manage and control; or
- (b) enter into an arrangement with any company or association for the establishment, management and control by that company or association either alone or jointly with the Commissioner of,

any fund or scheme for the purpose of providing for the pensions, gratuities, benefits and payments referred to in [subsection \(3\)](#).

(5) The Commissioner may make contributions to and may require employees to make contributions to any fund or scheme referred to in [subsection \(4\)](#).

(6) In this section “employees” includes any class of employee which the Commissioner specifies and in [subsection \(3\)](#) includes former employees.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 10 Delegations by Commissioner

(1) Subject to [subsection \(2\)](#), the Commissioner may delegate in writing any of his functions or powers under this Ordinance to any prescribed officer subject to such terms and conditions, if any, as he thinks fit and specified in the delegation.

(2) The Commissioner shall not delegate any of his functions or powers under-

- (a) [subsection \(1\)](#);
- (b) any provisions of any regulations made under this Ordinance which are specified in the regulations as provisions which shall not be subject to [subsection \(1\)](#);
- (c) any provisions of [Schedule 2](#) which are specified in that Schedule as provisions which shall not be subject to [subsection \(1\)](#).

(3) A delegate of the Commissioner-

- (a) shall perform the delegated functions and may exercise the delegated powers as if the delegate were the Commissioner; and
- (b) shall be presumed to be acting in accordance with the relevant delegation in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 11 Establishment of Personal Data (Privacy) Advisory Committee

(1) There is hereby established a committee by the name of the Personal Data (Privacy) Advisory Committee for the purpose of advising the Commissioner upon any matter relevant to the privacy of individuals in relation to personal data or otherwise relevant to the operation of this Ordinance.

(2) The Committee shall consist of-

- (a) the Commissioner, who shall be the chairman; and
- (b) not less than 4 or more than 8 other persons, appointed by the Secretary for Home Affairs, of whom-
 - (i) not less than 1 shall have not less than 5 years’ experience in the processing of data; and
 - (ii) not more than 1 shall be a public officer.

(3) The members of the Committee appointed under [subsection \(2\)\(b\)](#) shall hold office for such period and upon such terms as the Secretary for Home Affairs specifies in their respective appointments or from time to time.

(4) A member of the Committee appointed under [subsection \(2\)\(b\)](#) may resign at any time by notice in writing delivered to the Secretary for Home Affairs.

(5) The Committee may regulate its procedure.

(Enacted 1995)

PART III CODES OF PRACTICE

Section 12

Approval of codes of practice by Commissioner

(1) Subject to [subsections \(8\)](#) and [\(9\)](#), for the purpose of providing practical guidance in respect of any requirements under this Ordinance imposed on data users, the Commissioner may-

- (a) approve and issue such codes of practice (whether prepared by him or not) as in his opinion are suitable for that purpose; and
- (b) approve such codes of practice issued or proposed to be issued otherwise than by him as in his opinion are suitable for that purpose.

(2) Where a code of practice is approved under [subsection \(1\)](#), the Commissioner shall, by notice in the Gazette-

- (a) identify the code concerned and specify the date on which its approval is to take effect; and
- (b) specify for which of the requirements under this Ordinance the code is so approved.

(3) The Commissioner may-

- (a) from time to time revise the whole or any part of any code of practice prepared by him under this section; and
- (b) approve any revision or proposed revision of the whole or any part of any code of practice for the time being approved under this section,

and the provisions of [subsection \(2\)](#) shall, with the necessary modifications, apply in relation to the approval of any revision under this subsection as they apply in relation to the approval of a code of practice under [subsection \(1\)](#).

(4) The Commissioner may at any time withdraw his approval from any code of practice approved under this section.

(5) Where under [subsection \(4\)](#) the Commissioner withdraws his approval from a code of practice approved under this section, he shall, by notice in the Gazette, identify the code concerned and specify the date on which his approval of it is to cease to have effect.

(6) References in this Ordinance to an approved code of practice are references to that code as it has effect for the time being by virtue of any revision of the whole or any part of it approved under this section.

(7) The power of the Commissioner under [subsection \(1\)\(b\)](#) to approve a code of practice issued or proposed to be issued otherwise than by him shall include power to approve a part of such a code and, accordingly, in this Ordinance “code of practice” may be read as including a part of such a code.

(8) The Commissioner shall, not later than 6 months after the day on which this section comes into operation (or within such further period, not exceeding 6 months, as the Secretary for Home Affairs may allow), approve a code of practice under [subsection \(1\)](#) in respect of all or any requirements referred to in that subsection in so far as such requirements relate to personal data which are personal identifiers.

(9) The Commissioner shall, before approving a code of practice under [subsection \(1\)](#) or any revision or proposed revision of the code under [subsection \(3\)](#), consult with-

- (a) such bodies representative of data users to which the code or the code as so revised, as the case may be, will apply (whether in whole or in part); and
- (b) such other interested persons,

as he thinks fit.

(10) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that different codes of practice may be approved under [subsection \(1\)](#) (including any code of practice referred to in [subsection \(8\)](#)) for different classes of data users, and may be so approved for the same or different requirements referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#).

(Enacted 1995)

Section 13

Use of approved codes of practice in proceedings under this Ordinance

(1) A failure on the part of any data user to observe any provision of an approved code of practice shall not of itself render the data user liable to any civil or criminal proceedings but where in any proceedings under this Ordinance a data user is alleged to have contravened a requirement under this Ordinance, being a requirement for which there was an approved code of practice at the time of the alleged contravention, [subsection \(2\)](#) shall have effect with respect to such code in relation to those proceedings.

(2) Any provision of a code of practice which appears to a specified body to be relevant to a requirement under this Ordinance alleged to have been contravened shall be admissible in evidence in the proceedings under this Ordinance concerned and if it is proved that there was at any material time a failure to observe any provision of the code which appears to that body to be relevant to any matter which it is necessary to prove in order to establish a contravention of such requirement, that matter shall be taken as proved in the absence of evidence that such requirement was in respect of that matter complied with otherwise than by way of observance of that provision.

(3) In any proceedings under this Ordinance, a code of practice which appears to a specified body to be the subject of a notice under [section 12](#) shall be taken to be the subject of such notice in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

(4) In this section-

“proceedings under this Ordinance” includes any criminal proceedings

where a data user is alleged to have committed an offence by reason of a contravention of a requirement under this Ordinance;

“specified body” means-

- (a) a magistrate;

- (b) a court; or
- (c) the Administrative Appeals Board.

(Enacted 1995)

PART IV DATA USER RETURNS AND REGISTER OF DATA USERS

Section 14 Data user returns

(1) Subject to [subsection \(2\)](#), the Commissioner may, by notice in the Gazette, specify a class of data users to which this section shall apply.

(2) The Commissioner shall, before specifying a class of data users in a notice under [subsection \(1\)](#), consult with-

- (a) such bodies representative of data users belonging to that class; and
- (b) such other interested persons,

as he thinks fit.

(3) This section shall not apply to a data user except a data user belonging to a class of data users specified in a notice under [subsection \(1\)](#) which is in force.

(4) A data user shall submit to the Commissioner a data user return-

- (a) in the specified form;
- (b) containing the prescribed information required by the return in relation to the data user;
- (c) in the case of-
 - (i) a data user which belongs to the class of data users concerned on the day on which the notice under [subsection \(1\)](#) specifying that class commences, not earlier than 3 months before, and not later than, each anniversary of that day;
 - (ii) a data user which first belongs to the class of data users concerned on a day after the day on which the notice under [subsection \(1\)](#) specifying that class commences, not earlier than 3 months before, and not later than, each anniversary of that first-mentioned day; and
- (d) accompanied by the prescribed fee.

(5) The Commissioner shall cause a notice to be published not less than once during every period of 6 months-

- (a) in-
 - (i) the Gazette; and
 - (ii) not less than 1 Chinese language newspaper (and in the Chinese language) and not less than 1 English language newspaper (and in the English language), each of which shall be a newspaper circulating generally in Hong Kong; and

- (b) subject to [subsection \(6\)](#), specifying the places at which and the hours during which data user returns are available to be obtained by data users for the purposes of this section.

(6) The Commissioner shall not exercise his power under [subsection \(5\)\(b\)](#) to specify places which are Government offices unless and until he has the approval in writing of the Secretary for Home Affairs to do so.

(7) The Commissioner shall cause data user returns to be available to be obtained by data users-

- (a) free of charge; and
(b) at the places and during the hours specified in the last notice published under [subsection \(5\)](#).

(8) Where any prescribed information contained in a data user return submitted under [subsection \(4\)](#) to the Commissioner by a data user changes subsequent to the submission, then the data user shall serve a notice in writing on the Commissioner specifying such change-

- (a) if, but only if-
- (i) such information is specified in the return as information to which this subsection applies; and
 - (ii) the return contains, or has annexed to it-
- (A) a copy of this subsection; or
 - (B) a statement summarizing the requirement imposed by this subsection on the data user; and
- (b) not later than 30 days after such change.

(9) It is hereby declared that-

- (a) a notice under [subsection \(1\)](#) is subsidiary legislation;
- (b) where a data user belongs to 2 or more classes of data users specified in 2 or more notices under [subsection \(1\)](#) which are in force, then, for the purposes of this section, that data user shall be deemed to belong only to that class of data users specified in the first of those notices to be published in the Gazette; and
- (c) [subsection \(3\)](#) shall not operate to prejudice the generality of [section 67\(4\)\(c\)](#).

(10) In this section and [section 15](#), “prescribed information” means any information specified in [Schedule 3](#).

(Enacted 1995)

Section 15 Register of data users

(1) The Commissioner shall use-

- (a) data user returns submitted to him under [section 14\(4\)](#); and
(b) any notices served on him under [section 14\(8\)](#),

to keep and maintain a register of data users which have submitted such returns.

(2) The register shall-

- (a) be in the form of a database; and
- (b) contain, in respect of each data user who has submitted a data user return under [section 14\(4\)](#), such particulars of the information supplied in that return as the Commissioner thinks fit.

(3) The Commissioner may, by notice in writing served on a data user, require the data user to submit a notice in the prescribed form containing such prescribed information in relation to the data user as the Commissioner may reasonably require in order to keep and maintain the register in so far as it relates to that data user, and the data user shall so submit the second-mentioned notice within such period (being a period of not less than 30 days after service of the first-mentioned notice) and in such manner as the Commissioner requires in the first-mentioned notice.

(4) Where any prescribed information submitted to the Commissioner under [subsection \(3\)](#) by a data user changes subsequent to the submission, then the data user shall serve a notice in writing on the Commissioner specifying such change-

- (a) if, but only if-
 - (i) such information is specified in the notice concerned under that subsection as information to which this subsection applies; and
 - (ii) the notice referred to in [subparagraph \(i\)](#) contains, or has annexed to it-
 - (A) a copy of this subsection; or
 - (B) a statement summarizing the requirement imposed by this subsection on the data user; and
- (b) not later than 30 days after such change.

(5) If the Commissioner is satisfied that a person has ceased to be a data user, he may delete from the register any particulars contained therein relating to that person in that person's capacity as a data user.

(6) A person who has ceased to be a data user may, by notice in the specified form served on the Commissioner, request the Commissioner to delete from the register the particulars contained therein relating to that person in that person's capacity as a data user, and the Commissioner shall, not later than 3 months after the date on which he receives that notice, comply with that request unless it has been withdrawn by that person.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 16 Inspection of register

(1) The Commissioner shall provide facilities for making the particulars contained in the register available for inspection-

- (a) by any person;
- (b) in visible and legible form;
- (c) during ordinary office hours; and
- (d) free of charge.

- (2) The Commissioner shall-
- (a) on receipt of an application in the specified form from a person; and
 - (b) on payment of the prescribed fee,

provide a copy in writing of the particulars contained in the register in respect of the data user, or the class of data users, specified in the application.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 17

Register shall not limit, etc. operation of this Ordinance

- (1) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that-
- (a) whether or not the register contains any particulars;
 - (b) any particulars contained in the register,

in respect of a data user shall not of itself-

- (i) limit, restrict or qualify the operation of any of the provisions of this Ordinance (including [section 2\(5\)](#) and the data protection principles) in relation to the data user;
- (ii) exempt the data user from the operation of any of the provisions of this Ordinance.

(2) [Subsection \(1\)](#) shall not prejudice the operation of any limitation, restriction, qualification or exemption provided for in the other provisions of this Ordinance.

(Enacted 1995)

PART V

ACCESS TO AND CORRECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

Section 18

Data access request

- (1) An individual, or a relevant person on behalf of an individual, may make a request-
- (a) to be informed by a data user whether the data user holds personal data of which the individual is the data subject;
 - (b) if the data user holds such data, to be supplied by the data user with a copy of such data.

(2) A data access request under both paragraphs of [subsection \(1\)](#) shall be treated as being a single request, and the provisions of this Ordinance shall be construed accordingly.

(3) A data access request under [paragraph \(a\) of subsection \(1\)](#) may, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, be treated as being a data access request under both paragraphs of that subsection, and the provisions of this Ordinance (including [subsection \(2\)](#)) shall be construed accordingly.

- (4) A data user who, in relation to personal data-

- (a) does not hold the data; but
- (b) controls the use of the data in such a way as to prohibit the data user who does hold the data from complying (whether in whole or in part) with a data access request which relates to the data,

shall be deemed to hold those data, and the provisions of this Ordinance (including this section) shall be construed accordingly.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 19 Compliance with data access request

(1) Subject to [subsection \(2\)](#) and [sections 20](#) and [28\(5\)](#), a data user shall comply with a data access request not later than 40 days after receiving the request.

(2) A data user who is unable to comply with a data access request within the period specified in [subsection \(1\)](#) shall-

- (a) before the expiration of that period-
 - (i) by notice in writing inform the requestor that the data user is so unable and of the reasons why the data user is so unable; and
 - (ii) comply with the request to the extent, if any, that the data user is able to comply with the request; and
- (b) as soon as practicable after the expiration of that period, comply or fully comply, as the case may be, with the request.

(3) A copy of the personal data to be supplied by a data user in compliance with a data access request shall-

- (a) be supplied by reference to the data at the time when the request is received except that the copy may take account of-
 - (i) any processing of the data-
 - (A) made between that time and the time when the copy is supplied; and
 - (B) that would have been made irrespective of the receipt of the request; and
 - (ii) subject to [subsection \(5\)](#), any correction to the data made between that time and the time when the copy is supplied;
- (b) where any correction referred to [paragraph \(a\)\(ii\)](#) has been made to the data, be accompanied by a notice stating that the data have been corrected pursuant to that paragraph (or words to the like effect); and
- (c) as far as practicable, be-
 - (i) intelligible unless the copy is a true copy of a document which-
 - (A) contains the data; and
 - (B) is unintelligible on its face;

- (ii) readily comprehensible with any codes used by the data user adequately explained; and
- (iii) in-
 - (A) subject to [sub-subparagraph \(B\)](#), the language specified in the request or, if no language is so specified, the language in which the request is made (which may be the Chinese or English language in either case);
 - (B) a language other than the language specified in the request or, if no language is so specified, the language in which the request is made, if, but only if-
 - (I) the language in which the data are held is not the language specified in the request or, if no language is so specified, the language in which the request is made, as the case may be; and
 - (II) subject to [section 20\(2\)\(b\)](#), the copy is a true copy of a document which contains the data;
- (iv) without prejudice to the generality of [subparagraph \(iii\)](#) but subject to [subsection \(4\)](#), be in the form, or one of the forms, if any, specified in the request;
- (v) where [subparagraph \(iv\)](#) is not applicable, in such form as the data user thinks fit.

(4)Where-

- (a) a data access request specifies the form or forms in which a copy of the personal data to be supplied in compliance with the request is or are sought; and
- (b) the data user concerned is unable to supply the copy in that form or any of those forms, as the case may be, because it is not practicable for the data user to do so,

then the data user shall-

- (i) where there is only one form in which it is practicable for the data user to supply the copy, supply the copy in that form accompanied by a notice in writing informing the requestor that that form is the only form in which it is practicable for the data user to supply the copy;
- (ii) in any other case-
 - (A) as soon as practicable, by notice in writing inform the requestor-
 - (I) that it is not practicable for the data user to supply the copy in the form or any of the forms, as the case may be, specified in the request;
 - (II) of the forms in which it is practicable for the data user to supply the copy; and
 - (III) that the requestor may, not later than 14 days after the requestor has received the notice, specify in writing one of the forms referred to in [sub-subparagraph \(II\)](#) in which the copy is to be supplied; and
 - (B) as soon as practicable, supply the copy-

- (I) in the form specified in the response, if any, to the notice referred to in [subparagraph \(A\)](#);
- (II) if there is no such response within the period specified in [subparagraph \(A\)\(III\)](#), supply the copy in any one of the forms referred to in [subparagraph \(A\)\(II\)](#) as the data user thinks fit.

(5) [Subparagraph \(ii\) of paragraph \(a\)](#) and [paragraph \(b\) of subsection \(3\)](#) shall expire on the 1st anniversary of the appointed day.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 20

Circumstances in which data user shall or may refuse to comply with data access request

- (1) A data user shall refuse to comply with a data access request-
 - (a) if the data user is not supplied with such information as the data user may reasonably require-
 - (i) in order to satisfy the data user as to the identity of the requestor;
 - (ii) where the requestor purports to be a relevant person, in order to satisfy the data user-
 - (A) as to the identity of the individual in relation to whom the requestor purports to be such a person; and
 - (B) that the requestor is such a person in relation to that individual;
 - (b) subject to [subsection \(2\)](#), if the data user cannot comply with the request without disclosing personal data of which any other individual is the data subject unless the data user is satisfied that the other individual has consented to the disclosure of the data to the requestor; or
 - (c) in any other case, if compliance with the request is for the time being prohibited under this Ordinance.
- (2) [Subsection \(1\)\(b\)](#) shall not operate-
 - (a) so that the reference in that subsection to personal data of which any other individual is the data subject includes a reference to information identifying that individual as the source of the personal data to which the data access request concerned relates unless that information names or otherwise explicitly identifies that individual;
 - (b) so as to excuse a data user from complying with the data access request concerned to the extent that the request may be complied with without disclosing the identity of the other individual, whether by the omission of names, or other identifying particulars, or otherwise.
- (3) A data user may refuse to comply with a data access request if-
 - (a) the request is not in writing in the Chinese or English language;

- (b) the data user is not supplied with such information as the data user may reasonably require to locate the personal data to which the request relates;
- (c) the request follows 2 or more similar requests made by-
 - (i) the individual who is the data subject in respect of the personal data to which the request relates;
 - (ii) one or more relevant persons on behalf of that individual; or
 - (iii) any combination of that individual and those relevant persons,

and it is unreasonable in all the circumstances for the data user to comply with the request;

- (d) subject to [subsection \(4\)](#), any other data user controls the use of the data in such a way as to prohibit the first-mentioned data user from complying (whether in whole or in part) with the request;
- (e) the form in which the request shall be made has been specified under [section 67](#) and the request is not made in that form; or
- (f) in any other case, compliance with the request may for the time being be refused under this Ordinance, whether by virtue of an exemption under Part VIII or otherwise.

(4) [Subsection \(3\)\(d\)](#) shall not operate so as to excuse a data user from complying with the data access request concerned-

- (a) in so far as the request relates to [section 18\(1\)\(a\)](#), to any extent;
- (b) in so far as the request relates to [section 18\(1\)\(b\)](#), to any extent that the data user can comply with the request without contravening the prohibition concerned.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 21 Notification of refusal to comply with data access request

(1) Subject to [subsection \(2\)](#), a data user who pursuant to [section 20](#) refuses to comply with a data access request shall, as soon as practicable but, in any case, not later than 40 days after receiving the request, by notice in writing inform the requestor-

- (a) of the refusal;
- (b) subject to [subsection \(2\)](#), of the reasons for the refusal; and
- (c) where [section 20\(3\)\(d\)](#) is applicable, of the name and address of the other data user concerned.

(2) Where-

- (a) a data user has pursuant to [section 20](#) refused to comply with a data access request; and
- (b) the refusal also relates to [section 18\(1\)\(a\)](#) by virtue of [section 63](#),

then the data user may, in the notice under [subsection \(1\)](#) concerned, in place of the matters of which the data user is required to inform the requestor under that subsection, inform the requestor that the data user has no personal data the existence of which he is required to disclose to the requestor (or words to the like effect).

(Enacted 1995)

Section 22 Data correction request

- (1) Subject to [subsection \(2\)](#), where-
- (a) a copy of personal data has been supplied by a data user in compliance with a data access request; and
 - (b) the individual, or a relevant person on behalf of the individual, who is the data subject considers that the data are inaccurate,

then that individual or relevant person, as the case may be, may make a request that the data user make the necessary correction to the data.

- (2) A data user who, in relation to personal data-
- (a) does not hold the data; but
 - (b) controls the processing of the data in such a way as to prohibit the data user who does hold the data from complying (whether in whole or in part) with [section 23\(1\)](#) in relation to a data correction request which relates to the data,

shall be deemed to be a data user to whom such a request may be made, and the provisions of this Ordinance (including [subsection \(1\)](#)) shall be construed accordingly.

(3) Without prejudice to the generality of [sections 23\(1\)\(c\)](#) and [25\(2\)](#), if a data user, subsequent to the receipt of a data correction request but before complying with the request pursuant to [section 24](#) or refusing to comply with the request pursuant to [section 25](#), discloses to a third party the personal data to which the request relates, then the user shall take all practicable steps to advise the third party that the data are the subject of a data correction request still under consideration by the user (or words to the like effect).

(Enacted 1995)

Section 23 Compliance with data correction request

(1) Subject to [subsection \(2\)](#) and [section 24](#), a data user who is satisfied that personal data to which a data correction request relates are inaccurate shall, not later than 40 days after receiving the request-

- (a) make the necessary correction to those data;
- (b) supply the requestor with a copy of those data as so corrected; and
- (c) subject to [subsection \(3\)](#), if-
 - (i) those data have been disclosed to a third party during the 12 months immediately preceding the day on which the correction is made; and
 - (ii) the data user has no reason to believe that the third party has ceased using those data for the purpose (including any directly related purpose) for which the data were disclosed to the third party,

take all practicable steps to supply the third party with a copy of those data as so corrected accompanied by a notice in writing stating the reasons for the correction.

(2) A data user who is unable to comply with [subsection \(1\)](#) in relation to a data correction request within the period specified in that subsection shall-

- (a) before the expiration of that period-
 - (i) by notice in writing inform the requestor that the data user is so unable and of the reasons why the data user is so unable; and
 - (ii) comply with that subsection to the extent, if any, that the data user is able to comply with that subsection; and
- (b) as soon as practicable after the expiration of that period, comply or fully comply, as the case may be, with that subsection.

(3) A data user is not required to comply with [subsection \(1\)\(c\)](#) in any case where the disclosure concerned of the personal data to the third party consists of the third party's inspection of a register or other like document-

- (a) in which the data are entered or otherwise recorded; and
- (b) which is available for inspection by the public,

but this subsection shall not apply if the third party has been supplied with a copy, certified by or under the authority of the data user to be correct, of the data.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 24

Circumstances in which data user shall or may refuse to comply with data correction request

(1) Subject to [subsection \(2\)](#), a data user shall refuse to comply with [section 23\(1\)](#) in relation to a data correction request if the data user is not supplied with such information as the data user may reasonably require-

- (a) in order to satisfy the data user as to the identity of the requestor;
- (b) where the requestor purports to be a relevant person, in order to satisfy the data user-
 - (i) as to the identity of the individual in relation to whom the requestor purports to be such a person; and
 - (ii) that the requestor is such a person in relation to that individual.

(2) [Subsection \(1\)](#) shall not apply to a data correction request where the requestor is the same person as the requestor in respect of the data access request which gave rise to the data correction request.

(3) A data user may refuse to comply with [section 23\(1\)](#) in relation to a data correction request if-

- (a) the request is not in writing in the Chinese or English language;
- (b) the data user is not satisfied that the personal data to which the request relates are inaccurate;
- (c) the data user is not supplied with such information as the data user may reasonably require to ascertain in what way the personal data to which the request relates are inaccurate;

- (d) the data user is not satisfied that the correction which is the subject of the request is accurate; or
- (e) subject to [subsection \(4\)](#), any other data user controls the processing of the personal data to which the request relates in such a way as to prohibit the first-mentioned data user from complying (whether in whole or in part) with that section.

(4) [Subsection \(3\)\(e\)](#) shall not operate so as to excuse a data user from complying with [section 23\(1\)](#) in relation to the data correction request concerned to the extent that the data user can comply with that section without contravening the prohibition concerned.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 25

Notification of refusal to comply with data correction request, etc.

(1) A data user who pursuant to [section 24](#) refuses to comply with [section 23\(1\)](#) in relation to a data correction request shall, as soon as practicable but, in any case, not later than 40 days after receiving the request, by notice in writing inform the requestor-

- (a) of the refusal and the reasons for the refusal; and
- (b) where [section 24\(3\)\(e\)](#) is applicable, of the name and address of the other data user concerned.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of [subsection \(1\)](#), where-

- (a) the personal data to which a data correction request relates are an expression of opinion; and
- (b) the data user concerned is not satisfied that the opinion is inaccurate,

then the data user shall-

- (i) make a note, whether annexed to that data or elsewhere-
 - (A) of the matters in respect of which the opinion is considered by the requestor to be inaccurate; and
 - (B) in such a way that those data cannot be used by a person (including the data user and a third party) without the note being drawn to the attention of, and being available for inspection by, that person; and
 - (ii) attach a copy of the note to the notice referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#) which relates to that request.
- (3) In this section, “expression of opinion” includes an assertion of fact which-
- (a) is unverifiable; or
 - (b) in all the circumstances of the case, is not practicable to verify.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 26

Erasure of personal data no longer required

(1) A data user shall erase personal data held by the data user where the data are no longer required for the purpose (including any directly related purpose) for which the data were used unless-

- (a) any such erasure is prohibited under any law; or
- (b) it is in the public interest (including historical interest) for the data not to be erased.

(2) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that-

- (a) a data user shall erase personal data in accordance with [subsection \(1\)](#) notwithstanding that any other data user controls (whether in whole or in part) the processing of the data;
- (b) the first-mentioned data user shall not be liable in an action for damages at the suit of the second-mentioned data user in respect of any such erasure.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 27 Log book to be kept by data user

(1) A data user shall keep and maintain a log book-

- (a) for the purposes of this Part;
- (b) in the Chinese or English language; and
- (c) such that any particulars entered in the log book pursuant to this section are not erased therefrom before the expiration of-
 - (i) subject to [subparagraph \(ii\)](#), 4 years after the day on which they were so entered;
 - (ii) such longer or shorter period as may be prescribed, either generally or in any particular case, by regulations made under [section 70](#).

(2) A data user shall in accordance with [subsection \(3\)](#) enter in the log book-

- (a) where pursuant to [section 20](#) the data user refuses to comply with a data access request, particulars of the reasons for the refusal;
- (b) where pursuant to [section 21\(2\)](#) the data user does not comply with [section 21\(1\)](#), particulars of the prejudice that would be caused to the interest protected by the exemption concerned under [Part VIII](#) if the existence or non-existence of the personal data to which the data access request concerned relates were disclosed;
- (c) where pursuant to [section 24](#) the data user refuses to comply with [section 23\(1\)](#) in relation to a data correction request, particulars of the reasons for the refusal;
- (d) any other particulars required by regulations made under [section 70](#) to be entered in the log book.

(3) The particulars required by [subsection \(2\)](#) to be entered by a data user in the log book shall be so entered-

- (a) in the case of particulars referred to in [paragraph \(a\)](#) of that subsection, on or before the notice under [section 21\(1\)](#) is served in respect of the refusal to which those particulars relate;

- (b) in the case of particulars referred to in [paragraph \(b\)](#) of that subsection, on or before the notice under [section 21\(1\)](#) is served in respect of the refusal to which those particulars relate;
 - (c) in the case of particulars referred to in [paragraph \(c\)](#) of that subsection, on or before the notice under [section 25\(1\)](#) is served in respect of the refusal to which those particulars relate;
 - (d) in the case of particulars referred to in [paragraph \(d\)](#) of that subsection, within the period specified in regulations made under [section 70](#) in respect of those particulars.
- (4) A data user shall-
- (a) permit the Commissioner to inspect and copy the log book (or any part thereof) at any reasonable time; and
 - (b) without charge, afford the Commissioner such facilities and assistance as the Commissioner may reasonably require for the purposes of such inspection and copying.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 28 Imposition of fees by data user

(1) A data user shall not impose a fee for complying or refusing to comply with a data access request or data correction request unless the imposition of the fee is expressly permitted by this section.

(2) Subject to [subsections \(3\)](#) and [\(4\)](#), a data user may impose a fee for complying with a data access request.

(3) No fee imposed for complying with a data access request shall be excessive.

(4) Where pursuant to [section 19\(3\)\(c\)\(iv\)](#) or [\(v\)](#) or [\(4\)\(ii\)\(B\)\(II\)](#) a data user may comply with a data access request by supplying a copy of the personal data to which the request relates in one of 2 or more forms, the data user shall not, and irrespective of the form in which the data user complies with the request, impose a fee for complying with the request which is higher than the lowest fee the data user imposes for complying with the request in any of those forms.

(5) A data user may refuse to comply with a data access request unless and until any fee imposed by the data user for complying with the request has been paid.

(6) Where-

- (a) a data user has complied with a data access request by supplying a copy of the personal data to which the request relates; and
- (b) the data subject, or a relevant person on behalf of the data subject, requests the data user to supply a further copy of those data,

then the data user may, and notwithstanding the fee, if any, that the data user imposed for complying with that data access request, impose a fee for supplying that further copy which is not more than the administrative and other costs incurred by the data user in supplying that further copy.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 29 Service and language of certain notices

Without prejudice to the generality of [section 68](#), where pursuant to a data access request or data correction request a data user is required to, or may, inform a requestor of any matter by notice in writing, then the requestor shall be deemed not to be so informed unless and until the requestor is served with the notice-

- (a) in the language in which the request is made if that language is Chinese or English;
- (b) in any other case, in the Chinese or English language as the data user thinks fit.

(Enacted 1995)

PART VI MATCHING PROCEDURES AND TRANSFERS OF PERSONAL DATA, ETC.

Section 30 Matching procedure not to be carried out except with consent of data subject, etc.

- (1) A data user shall not carry out, whether in whole or in part, a matching procedure-
 - (a) unless and until each individual who is a data subject of the personal data the subject of that procedure has given his prescribed consent to the procedure being carried out;
 - (b) unless and until the Commissioner has consented under [section 32](#) to the procedure being carried out;
 - (c) unless the procedure-
 - (i) belongs to a class of matching procedures specified in a notice under [subsection \(2\)](#); and
 - (ii) is carried out in accordance with the conditions, if any, specified in the notice; or
 - (d) unless it is required or permitted under any provision of any Ordinance specified in [Schedule 4](#).
- (2) For the purposes of this section, the Commissioner may, by notice in the Gazette, specify-
 - (a) a class of matching procedures;
 - (b) subject to [subsection \(3\)](#), the conditions, if any, subject to which a matching procedure belonging to that class shall be carried out.
- (3) The Commissioner shall, before specifying any conditions in a notice under [subsection \(2\)](#), consult with-
 - (a) such bodies representative of data users to which the conditions will apply (whether in whole or in part); and
 - (b) such other interested persons,

as he thinks fit.

(4) It is hereby declared that a notice under [subsection \(2\)](#) is subsidiary legislation.

(5) Subject to [subsection \(6\)](#), a data user shall not take adverse action against an individual in consequence (whether in whole or in part) of the carrying out of a matching procedure-

(a) unless the data user has served a notice in writing on the individual-

(i) specifying the adverse action it proposes to take and the reasons therefor; and

(ii) stating that the individual has 7 days after the receipt of the notice within which to show cause why that action should not be taken; and

(b) until the expiration of those 7 days.

(6) [Subsection \(5\)](#) shall not operate to prevent a data user from taking adverse action against an individual if compliance with the requirements of that subsection would prejudice any investigation into the commission of an offence or the possible commission of an offence.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 31 Matching procedure request

(1) A data user proposing to carry out, whether in whole or in part, a matching procedure may make a request-

(a) in the specified form;

(b) to the Commissioner; and

(c) seeking the Commissioner's consent under [section 32](#) to the carrying out of that procedure.

(2) Where 2 or more data users may each make a matching procedure request in respect of the same matching procedure, then any of those data users may make such a request on behalf of all those data users, and the provisions of this Ordinance (including [subsection \(1\)](#)) shall be construed accordingly.

(3) Without prejudice to the generality of [subsection \(2\)](#), it is hereby declared that a matching procedure request may be made in relation to 2 or more matching procedures, or a series of matching procedures, and the other provisions of this Ordinance (including [section 32](#)) shall be construed accordingly.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 32 Determination of matching procedure request

(1) The Commissioner shall determine a matching procedure request-

(a) not later than 45 days after receiving the request; and

(b) by taking into account the prescribed matters applicable to the request and-

(i) where he is satisfied as to those matters, serving a notice in writing on the requestor stating that he consents to the carrying out of the matching procedure to which the request relates subject to the conditions, if any, specified in the notice;

- (ii) where he is not so satisfied, serving a notice in writing on the requestor stating-
 - (A) that he refuses to consent to the carrying out of the matching procedure to which the request relates; and
 - (B) such of those matters in respect of which he is not so satisfied and the reasons why he is not so satisfied.

(2) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that a consent in a notice under [subsection \(1\)\(b\)\(i\)](#) to the carrying out of a matching procedure to which a matching procedure request relates shall not operate to prevent a data user who is neither the requestor nor, where [section 31\(2\)](#) applies to the request, any data user on whose behalf such request was made, from carrying out, whether in whole or in part, the procedure.

(3) An appeal may be made to the Administrative Appeals Board-

- (a) against-
 - (i) any conditions specified in a notice under [subsection \(1\)\(b\)\(i\)](#); or
 - (ii) any refusal specified in a notice under [subsection \(1\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#); and
- (b) by the requestor on whom the notice was served or any data user on whose behalf the matching procedure request concerned was made.

(4) In this section, “prescribed matter” means a matter specified in [Schedule 5](#).

(Enacted 1995)

Section 33

Prohibition against transfer of personal data to place outside Hong Kong except in specified circumstances

Remarks:

not yet in operation

(1) This section shall not apply to personal data other than personal data the collection, holding, processing or use of which-

- (a) takes place in Hong Kong; or
- (b) is controlled by a data user whose principal place of business is in Hong Kong.

(2) A data user shall not transfer personal data to a place outside Hong Kong unless-

- (a) the place is specified for the purposes of this section in a notice under [subsection \(3\)](#);
- (b) the user has reasonable grounds for believing that there is in force in that place any law which is substantially similar to, or serves the same purposes as, this Ordinance;
- (c) the data subject has consented in writing to the transfer;
- (d) the user has reasonable grounds for believing that, in all the circumstances of the case-
 - (i) the transfer is for the avoidance or mitigation of adverse action against the data subject;

- (ii) it is not practicable to obtain the consent in writing of the data subject to that transfer; and
- (iii) if it was practicable to obtain such consent, the data subject would give it;
- (e) the data are exempt from data protection principle 3 by virtue of an exemption under [Part VIII](#); or
- (f) the user has taken all reasonable precautions and exercised all due diligence to ensure that the data will not, in that place, be collected, held, processed or used in any manner which, if that place were Hong Kong, would be a contravention of a requirement under this Ordinance.

(3) Where the Commissioner has reasonable grounds for believing that there is in force in a place outside Hong Kong any law which is substantially similar to, or serves the same purposes as, this Ordinance, he may, by notice in the Gazette, specify that place for the purposes of this section.

(4) Where the Commissioner has reasonable grounds for believing that in a place specified in a notice under [subsection \(3\)](#) there is no longer in force any law which is substantially similar to, or serves the same purposes as, this Ordinance, he shall, either by repealing or amending that notice, cause that place to cease to be specified for the purposes of this section.

(5) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that-

- (a) for the purposes of [subsection \(1\)\(b\)](#), a data user which is a company incorporated in Hong Kong is a data user whose principal place of business is in Hong Kong;
- (b) a notice under [subsection \(3\)](#) is subsidiary legislation; and
- (c) this section shall not operate to prejudice the generality of [section 50](#).

(Enacted 1995)

Section 34

Use of personal data in direct marketing

(1) A data user who-

- (a) has obtained personal data from any source (including the data subject); and
- (b) uses the data for direct marketing purposes,

shall-

- (i) the first time he so uses those data after this section comes into operation, inform the data subject that the data user is required, without charge to the data subject, to cease to so use those data if the data subject so requests;
- (ii) if the data subject so requests, cease to so use those data without charge to the data subject.

(2) In this section-

“direct marketing” means-

- (a) the offering of goods, facilities or services;
- (b) the advertising of the availability of goods, facilities or services; or

- (c) the solicitation of donations or contributions for charitable, cultural, philanthropic, recreational, political or other purposes,

by means of-

- (i) information or goods sent to any person by mail, facsimile transmission, electronic mail, or other similar means of communication, where the information or goods are addressed to a specific person or specific persons by name; or
- (ii) telephone calls made to specific persons.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 35

Repeated collections of personal data in same circumstances

(1) A data user who-

- (a) has complied with the provisions of data protection principle 1(3) in respect of the collection of any personal data from the data subject (“first collection”); and
- (b) on any subsequent occasion again collects personal data from the data subject (“subsequent collection”),

is not required to comply with those provisions in respect of the subsequent collection if, but only if-

- (i) to comply with those provisions in respect of that subsequent collection would be to repeat, without any material difference, what was done to comply with that principle in respect of the first collection; and
- (ii) not more than 12 months have elapsed between the first collection and the subsequent collection.

(2) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that [subsection \(1\)](#) shall not operate to prevent a subsequent collection from becoming a first collection if, but only if, the data user concerned has complied with the provisions of data protection principle 1(3) in respect of the subsequent collection.

(Enacted 1995)

PART VII

INSPECTIONS, COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Section 36

Inspections of personal data systems

Without prejudice to the generality of [section 38](#), the Commissioner may carry out an inspection of-

- (a) any personal data system used by a data user; or

- (b) any personal data system used by a data user belonging to a class of data users, for the purposes of ascertaining information to assist the Commissioner in making recommendations-
 - (i) to-
 - (A) where [paragraph \(a\)](#) is applicable, the relevant data user;
 - (B) where [paragraph \(b\)](#) is applicable, the class of data users to which the relevant data user belongs; and
 - (ii) relating to the promotion of compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance, in particular the data protection principles, by the relevant data user, or the class of data users to which the relevant data user belongs, as the case may be.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 37 Complaints

(1) An individual, or a relevant person on behalf of an individual, may make a complaint to the Commissioner about an act or practice-

- (a) specified in the complaint; and
- (b) that-
 - (i) has been done or engaged in, or is being done or engaged in, as the case may be, by a data user specified in the complaint;
 - (ii) relates to personal data of which the individual is or, in any case in which the data user is relying upon an exemption under [Part VIII](#), may be, the data subject; and
 - (iii) may be a contravention of a requirement under this Ordinance (including [section 28\(4\)](#)).

(2) Where 2 or more individuals may each make a complaint about the same act or practice, then any of those individuals, or any relevant person on behalf of any of those individuals, may make such a complaint on behalf of all those individuals, and the provisions of this Ordinance (including [subsection \(1\)](#)) shall be construed accordingly.

(3) A complaint shall be-

- (a) in writing in the Chinese or English language; or
- (b) in such other form as the Commissioner may accept.

(4) It shall be the duty of the Commissioner and each prescribed officer who has been employed under [section 9\(1\)\(a\)](#) to provide appropriate assistance to an individual, or a relevant person on behalf of an individual, who wishes to make a complaint and requires assistance to formulate the complaint.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 38 Investigations by Commissioner

Where the Commissioner-

- (a) receives a complaint; or
- (b) has reasonable grounds to believe that an act or practice-
 - (i) has been done or engaged in, or is being done or engaged in, as the case may be, by a data user;
 - (ii) relates to personal data; and
 - (iii) may be a contravention of a requirement under this Ordinance,

then-

- (i) where [paragraph \(a\)](#) is applicable, the Commissioner shall, subject to [section 39](#), carry out an investigation in relation to the relevant data user to ascertain whether the act or practice specified in the complaint is a contravention of a requirement under this Ordinance;
- (ii) where [paragraph \(b\)](#) is applicable, the Commissioner may carry out an investigation in relation to the relevant data user to ascertain whether the act or practice referred to in that paragraph is a contravention of a requirement under this Ordinance.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 39

Restrictions on investigations initiated by complaints

(1) Notwithstanding the generality of the powers conferred on the Commissioner by this Ordinance, the Commissioner may refuse to carry out or continue an investigation initiated by a complaint if-

- (a) the complainant (or, if the complainant is a relevant person, the individual in respect of whom the complainant is such a person) has had actual knowledge of the act or practice specified in the complaint for more than 2 years immediately preceding the date on which the Commissioner received the complaint, unless the Commissioner is satisfied that in all the circumstances of the case it is proper to carry out or continue, as the case may be, the investigation;
- (b) the complaint is made anonymously;
- (c) the complainant cannot be identified or traced;
- (d) none of the following conditions is fulfilled in respect of the act or practice specified in the complaint-
 - (i) either-
 - (A) the complainant (or, if the complainant is a relevant person, the individual in respect of whom the complainant is such a person) was resident in Hong Kong; or
 - (B) the relevant data user was able to control, in or from Hong Kong, the collection, holding, processing or use of the personal data concerned,

at any time the act or practice was done or engaged in, as the case may be;

- (ii) the complainant (or, if the complainant is a relevant person, the individual in respect of whom the complainant is such a person) was in Hong Kong at any time the act or practice was done or engaged in, as the case may be;
- (iii) in the opinion of the Commissioner, the act or practice done or engaged in, as the case may be, may prejudice the enforcement of any right, or the exercise of any privilege, acquired or accrued in Hong Kong by the complainant (or, if the complainant is a relevant person, the individual in respect of whom the complainant is such a person); or
- (e) the Commissioner is satisfied that the relevant data user has not been a data user for a period of not less than 2 years immediately preceding the date on which the Commissioner received the complaint.

(2) The Commissioner may refuse to carry out or continue an investigation initiated by a complaint if he is of the opinion that, having regard to all the circumstances of the case-

- (a) the complaint, or a complaint of a substantially similar nature, has previously initiated an investigation as a result of which the Commissioner was of the opinion that there had been no contravention of a requirement under this Ordinance;
- (b) the act or practice specified in the complaint is trivial;
- (c) the complaint is frivolous or vexatious or is not made in good faith; or
- (d) any investigation or further investigation is for any other reason unnecessary.

(3) Where the Commissioner refuses under this section to carry out or continue an investigation initiated by a complaint, he shall, as soon as practicable but, in any case, not later than 45 days after receiving the complaint, by notice in writing served on the complainant accompanied by a copy of [subsection \(4\)](#), inform the complainant-

- (a) of the refusal; and
- (b) of the reasons for the refusal.

(4) An appeal may be made to the Administrative Appeals Board-

- (a) against any refusal specified in a notice under [subsection \(3\)](#); and
- (b) by the complainant on whom the notice was served (or, if the complainant is a relevant person, the individual in respect of whom the complainant is such a person, or either).

(Enacted 1995)

Section 40

Commissioner may carry out or continue investigation initiated by complaint notwithstanding withdrawal of complaint

Where the Commissioner is of the opinion that it is in the public interest so to do, he may carry out or continue an investigation initiated by a complaint notwithstanding that the complainant has withdrawn the complaint and, in any such case, the provisions of this Ordinance shall apply to the complaint and the complainant as if the complaint had not been withdrawn.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 41

Commissioner to inform relevant data user of inspection or investigation

(1) The Commissioner shall, before carrying out an inspection or, subject to [subsection \(2\)](#), an investigation, by notice in writing served on the relevant data user, inform the data user of his intention to carry out the inspection or investigation, as the case may be.

(2) The Commissioner is not required to comply with [subsection \(1\)](#) in the case of any investigation in respect of which he has reasonable grounds to believe that to so comply may prejudice the purposes of the investigation.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 42

Power of entry on premises for the purposes of an inspection or investigation

(1) Subject to [subsections \(3\)](#) and [\(8\)](#), the Commissioner may, for the purposes of an inspection-

- (a) where the personal data system, or any part thereof, the subject of the inspection is situated in-
 - (i) non-domestic premises, enter the premises at any reasonable time;
 - (ii) domestic premises, enter the premises with the consent of any person (other than a minor) resident therein;
- (b) carry out in the premises the inspection.

(2) Subject to [subsections \(3\)](#) and [\(8\)](#), the Commissioner may, for the purposes of an investigation-

- (a) enter any premises-
 - (i) occupied by the relevant data user; or
 - (ii) in which is situated the personal data system, or any part thereof, used by the relevant data user;
- (b) carry out in the premises the investigation.

(3) Subject to [subsections \(4\)](#) and [\(5\)](#), the Commissioner shall, not less than 14 days before exercising his power under [subsection \(1\)](#) or [\(2\)](#) in respect of any premises, by notice in writing served on the relevant data user, inform the data user-

- (a) of the premises in respect of which he proposes to exercise that power; and
- (b) that the power will not be so exercised before the expiration of 14 days after service of the notice.

(4) Without prejudice to the generality of [subsection \(5\)](#), where any domestic premises are specified in a notice under [subsection \(3\)](#) in respect of which the Commissioner proposes to exercise his power under [subsection \(2\)](#), then the Commissioner shall not exercise that power in respect of those premises unless and until a person (other than a minor) resident therein consents thereto before the expiration of 14 days after service of the notice.

(5) The Commissioner may, pursuant to a warrant issued under [subsection \(6\)](#), exercise his power under [subsection \(2\)](#) in respect of the premises specified in the warrant without complying with [subsection \(3\)](#).

(6) A magistrate may, if satisfied by information upon oath by the Commissioner or any prescribed officer that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the purposes of any investigation may be substantially prejudiced if the Commissioner were required to comply with [subsection \(3\)](#) before exercising his power under [subsection \(2\)](#) in respect of any premises, issue a warrant-

- (a) in the form specified in [Part 1 of Schedule 6](#); and
- (b) in respect of those premises.

(7) A magistrate may, if satisfied by information upon oath by the Commissioner or any prescribed officer that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the purposes of an investigation may be substantially prejudiced if the Commissioner is prevented by the operation of [subsection \(4\)](#) from exercising his power under [subsection \(2\)](#) in respect of any domestic premises, issue a warrant-

- (a) in the form specified in [Part 2 of Schedule 6](#); and
- (b) authorizing the Commissioner to exercise that power in respect of those premises.

(8) The Commissioner shall not exercise his power under [subsection \(1\)](#) or [\(2\)](#) in respect of any premises in such a way as to unduly disrupt any operations being carried out in the premises, whether by the relevant data user or any other person.

(9) Where the Commissioner exercises his power under [subsection \(1\)](#) or [\(2\)](#), the relevant data user shall, without charge, afford the Commissioner such facilities and assistance as the Commissioner may reasonably require for the purposes of the inspection or investigation concerned.

(10) Where the Commissioner, pursuant to a warrant issued under [subsection \(6\)](#), exercises his power under [subsection \(2\)](#) in respect of the premises specified in the warrant, he shall produce the warrant for inspection by any person found in those premises who questions his authority to exercise that power in respect of those premises.

(11) In this section and [Schedule 6](#)-

“domestic premises” means any premises which are constructed or intended to be used for habitation;

“non-domestic premises” means any premises other than domestic premises;

“premises” means-

- (a) any building where no part of the building is separately occupied, and includes any land appertaining to the building;
- (b) in any other case, any part of a building which is separately occupied, and includes any land appertaining to such part.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 43 Proceedings of Commissioner

(1) Subject to the provisions of this Ordinance, the Commissioner may, for the purposes of any investigation-

- (a) be furnished with any information, document or thing, from such persons, and make such inquiries, as he thinks fit; and
- (b) regulate his procedure in such manner as he thinks fit.

(2) Any hearing for the purposes of an investigation shall be carried out in public unless-

- (a) the Commissioner is of the opinion that, in all the circumstances of the case, the investigation should be carried out in private; or
- (b) if the investigation was initiated by a complaint, the complainant requests in writing that the investigation be carried out in private.

(3) Counsel and solicitors shall not have any right of audience before the Commissioner at any hearing for the purposes of an investigation, but may appear before him if he thinks fit.

(4) It shall not be necessary for the Commissioner to hold any hearing for the purposes of an investigation and no person shall be entitled to be heard by the Commissioner.

(5) If at any time during the course of an investigation it appears to the Commissioner that there may be sufficient grounds for him to make any report or recommendation that may criticize or adversely affect any person he shall give to the person an opportunity to be heard.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 44 Evidence

Remarks:

Amendments retroactively made-see 25 of 1998 s. 2

(1) Subject to [subsection \(2\)](#) and [section 45](#), the Commissioner may, for the purposes of any investigation, summon before him any person who-

- (a) in the opinion of the Commissioner, is able to give any information relevant to those purposes;
- (b) where the investigation was initiated by a complaint, is the complainant (or, if the complainant is a relevant person, the individual in respect of whom the complainant is such a person, or both),

and may examine any such person and require him to furnish to the Commissioner any information and to produce any document or thing which, in the opinion of the Commissioner, is relevant to those purposes and which may be in the possession or under the control of any such person.

(2) Where-

- (a) an investigation has been initiated by a complaint;
- (b) the complaint relates, whether in whole or in part, to personal data referred to in [section 61\(1\)](#);
- (c) the Commissioner has, for the purposes of that investigation, under [subsection \(1\)\(a\)](#) summoned before him a person; and

- (d) that person asserts, in response to any requirement under [subsection \(1\)](#) by the Commissioner to furnish him with information or to produce a document or thing, that-
- (i) to comply with that requirement would directly or indirectly disclose the identity of the individual from whom those data were collected (whether in whole or in part); or
 - (ii) he is not required to comply with that requirement by virtue of any common law privilege,

then-

- (i) notwithstanding any other provision of this Ordinance, the Commissioner shall not serve an enforcement notice on that person in relation to that requirement;
- (ii) the Commissioner may, not later than 28 days after that assertion is made known to him, make an application to the Court of First Instance for an order directing that person to comply with that requirement; (Amended 25 of 1998 s. 2)
- (iii) the Court of First Instance may make the order if, but only if, it is satisfied, having regard to all the circumstances (including the circumstances of the complainant), that- (Amended 25 of 1998 s. 2)
- (A) if the act or practice specified in the complaint were proven to be a contravention of a requirement under this Ordinance, the contravention would be of sufficient gravity to warrant that person complying with the requirement referred to in [paragraph \(d\)](#);
- (B) that investigation would be substantially prejudiced if the requirement referred to in [paragraph \(d\)](#) were not complied with;
- (C) it is in the public interest, having regard to the benefit likely to accrue to that investigation, that the requirement referred to in [paragraph \(d\)](#) be complied with; and
- (D) in any case to which [paragraph \(d\)\(ii\)](#) is applicable, the common law privilege asserted does not apply; and
- (iv) on the hearing of the application, the Commissioner, that person and the complainant shall each be entitled to be heard on the application and to call, examine and cross-examine any witness.

(3) Where-

- (a) a person has complied with a requirement referred to in [subsection \(2\)\(d\)](#) the subject of an assertion referred to in that subsection; and
- (b) the result (whether in whole or in part) of the investigation to which that requirement relates is that the Commissioner is of the opinion that the individual concerned referred to in [subsection \(2\)\(d\)\(i\)](#) has not contravened a requirement under this Ordinance in relation to the matter the subject of the complaint which initiated the investigation,

then, notwithstanding any other provision of this Ordinance, neither the Commissioner nor any prescribed officer shall disclose the identity of that individual to the complainant.

(4) The Court of First Instance may, of its own volition or on an application made to it for the purpose, by order reverse, vary or discharge an order made under [subsection \(2\)\(iii\)](#) or suspend the operation of such an order. (Amended 25 of 1998 s. 2)

(5) Provision may be made by rules of court-

- (a) with respect to applications to the Court of First Instance under [subsection \(2\)\(iii\)](#) or [\(4\)](#);
- (b) generally with respect to procedure before the Court of First Instance in relation to any such application. (Amended 25 of 1998 s. 2)

(6) [Subsection \(5\)](#) is without prejudice to the generality of any existing power to make rules.

(7) The Commissioner may administer an oath for the purposes of an examination under [subsection \(1\)](#) if he thinks fit.

(8) It is hereby declared that-

- (a) no obligation to maintain secrecy or other restriction, imposed by law, upon the disclosure of any information, document or other thing, that is or has been in the possession or under the control of any person referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#), shall apply to its disclosure for the purposes of an investigation; and
- (b) any requirement by the Commissioner that any such information, document or thing as is referred to in [paragraph \(a\)](#) be disclosed or produced for the purposes of an investigation shall be sufficient authority for its disclosure or production to the Commissioner.

(9) The Commissioner may pay the reasonable expenses of complainants (including, if the complainant is a relevant person, the individual in respect of whom the complainant is such a person) and witnesses incurred during the course of an investigation.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 45 Protection of witnesses, etc.

Remarks:

Adaptation amendments retroactively made - see 25 of 1998 s. 2; 34 of 1999 s. 3

(1) Every person shall have the same privileges in relation to the giving of information, the answering of questions, and the production of documents and things, for the purposes of an investigation, as witnesses have in civil proceedings in the High Court but any rule of law which authorizes or requires the withholding of any document or thing, or the refusal to answer any question, on the ground that the disclosure of the document or thing or the answering of the question, as the case may be, would be injurious to the public interest, shall not apply in respect of any investigation. (Amended 25 of 1998 s. 2)

(2) Except on the trial of any person for perjury in respect of his sworn testimony, or for an offence under this Ordinance, no statement made or answer given by that or any other person in the course of any investigation shall be admissible in evidence against any person, before any magistrate or in any court or at any inquiry or in any other proceedings, and no evidence in respect of an investigation shall be given against any person.

(3) Where the giving of any information or the answering of any question or the production of any document or thing would involve the disclosure, without the consent of the Chief Executive, of the deliberations of the Executive Council, the Commissioner shall not require the information or answer to be given or, as the case may be, the document or thing to be produced. (Amended 34 of 1999 s. 3)

(Enacted 1995)

Section 46 Commissioner, etc. to maintain secrecy

(1) Subject to [subsections \(2\)](#) and [\(3\)](#), the Commissioner and every prescribed officer shall maintain secrecy in respect of all matters that come to their actual knowledge in the performance of their functions and the exercise of their powers under this Part.

(2) [Subsection \(1\)](#) shall not operate so as to prevent the Commissioner or any prescribed officer from-

- (a) disclosing in the course of proceedings-
 - (i) for an offence under this Ordinance; and
 - (ii) before any court or magistrate,

any matter relevant to those proceedings;

- (b) reporting evidence of any crime to such authority as he considers appropriate;
- (c) disclosing to a person any matter referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#) which, in the opinion of the Commissioner or prescribed officer, may be ground for a complaint by that person.

(3) Subject to [subsection \(4\)](#), the Commissioner may disclose in any report made by him under this Ordinance any matter that in his opinion ought to be disclosed in order to establish grounds for his findings and recommendations other than a matter the disclosure of which in his opinion would involve the disclosure of personal data that are exempt from data protection principle 6 by virtue of an exemption under [Part VIII](#).

(4) The Commissioner shall not publish a report under this Ordinance after completing an inspection or investigation unless-

- (a) a copy of the report in the form in which it is to be published has been supplied to the relevant data user;
- (b) that copy is accompanied by a notice in writing inviting the data user to advise the Commissioner, in writing and not later than 28 days after being served with the copy, whether-
 - (i) in the opinion of the data user there is any matter in the copy the disclosure of which would involve the disclosure of personal data that are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 6 by virtue of an exemption under [Part VIII](#); and
 - (ii) the data user objects to the disclosure of the matter; and
- (c) either-
 - (i) the period referred to in [paragraph \(b\)](#) has expired without the Commissioner receiving any such advice; or

- (ii) such advice is received by the Commissioner and-
 - (A) the Commissioner deletes from the report the matter the subject of the advice; or
 - (B) the Commissioner decides not to delete that matter from the report and-
 - (I) the period referred to in [subsection \(6\)](#) expires without the data user making an appeal under that subsection against that decision; or
 - (II) such an appeal is unsuccessful or withdrawn.

(5) Where the Commissioner makes a decision referred to in [subsection \(4\)\(c\)\(ii\)\(B\)](#), he shall serve on the relevant data user who gave the advice concerned a notice in writing-

- (a) stating his decision;
- (b) informing the data user that he may appeal under [subsection \(6\)](#) against that decision; and
- (c) accompanied by a copy of this section.

(6) An appeal may be made to the Administrative Appeals Board against a decision of the Commissioner referred to in [subsection \(4\)\(c\)\(ii\)\(B\)](#) by the relevant data user not later than 14 days after the notice under [subsection \(5\)](#) stating that decision has been served on the data user.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 47

Persons to be informed of result of inspection or investigation

(1) Where the Commissioner has completed an inspection, he shall, in such manner and at such time as he thinks fit, inform the relevant data user of-

- (a) the result of the inspection;
- (b) any recommendations arising from the inspection that the Commissioner thinks fit to make relating to the promotion of compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance, in particular the data protection principles, by the data user;
- (c) any report arising from the inspection that he proposes to publish under [section 48](#); and
- (d) such other comments arising from the inspection as he thinks fit to make.

(2) Where the Commissioner has completed an investigation, he shall, in such manner and at such times as he thinks fit, inform the relevant data user of-

- (a) the result of the investigation;
- (b) any recommendations arising from the investigation that the Commissioner thinks fit to make relating to the promotion of compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance, in particular the data protection principles, by the data user;
- (c) any report arising from the investigation that he proposes to publish under [section 48](#);
- (d) whether or not he proposes to serve an enforcement notice on the data user in consequence of the investigation; and
- (e) such other comments arising from the investigation as he thinks fit to make.

(3) Where the Commissioner has completed an investigation initiated by a complaint, he shall, in such manner and at such time as he thinks fit, inform the complainant of-

- (a) the result of the investigation;
- (b) any recommendations made to the relevant data user under [subsection \(2\)\(b\)](#);
- (c) any report arising from the investigation that he proposes to publish under [section 48](#);
- (d) any comments made by or on behalf of the relevant data user on any such recommendations or report;
- (e) whether or not he has served, or proposes to serve, an enforcement notice on the relevant data user in consequence of the investigation;
- (f) if the Commissioner has not so served, and does not propose to so serve, such enforcement notice, his right to object thereto under [subsection \(4\)](#); and
- (g) such other comments arising from the investigation as he thinks fit to make.

(4) The complainant (or, if the complainant is a relevant person, the individual in respect of whom the complainant is such a person, or either) may appeal to the Administrative Appeals Board against a decision of the Commissioner-

- (a) to the effect that he has not served, and does not propose to serve, an enforcement notice on the relevant data user in consequence of the investigation concerned; and
- (b) of which the complainant was informed in the notice concerned under [subsection \(3\)](#) served on him.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 48 Reports by Commissioner

(1) Subject to [subsection \(3\)](#), the Commissioner may, after completing an inspection where section 36(b) is applicable, publish a report-

- (a) setting out any recommendations arising from the inspection that the Commissioner thinks fit to make relating to the promotion of compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance, in particular the data protection principles, by the class of data users to which the relevant data user belongs; and
- (b) in such manner as he thinks fit.

(2) Subject to [subsection \(3\)](#), the Commissioner may, after completing an investigation and if he is of the opinion that it is in the public interest to do so, publish a report-

- (a) setting out-
 - (i) the result of the investigation;
 - (ii) any recommendations arising from the investigation that the Commissioner thinks fit to make relating to the promotion of compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance, in particular the data protection principles, by the class of data users to which the relevant data user belongs; and
 - (iii) such other comments arising from the investigation as he thinks fit to make; and
- (b) in such manner as he thinks fit.

(3) Subject to [subsection \(4\)](#), a report published under [subsection \(1\)](#) or [\(2\)](#) shall be so framed as to prevent the identity of any individual being ascertained from it.

(4) [Subsection \(3\)](#) shall not apply to any individual who is-

- (a) the Commissioner or a prescribed officer;
- (b) the relevant data user.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 49

Cases in which sections 47 and 48 shall not apply

Where-

- (a) the Commissioner has completed an investigation (and whether or not the investigation was initiated by a complaint);
- (b) the result of the investigation is that the act or practice the subject of the investigation is not a contravention of a requirement under this Ordinance because of an exemption under [Part VIII](#); and
- (c) the interest protected by that exemption would be likely to be prejudiced if [sections 47](#) and [48](#) applied in relation to the investigation,

then-

- (i) those sections shall not apply in relation to the investigation; and
- (ii) the Commissioner shall, in such manner and at such time as he thinks fit-
 - (A) inform the relevant data user of the result of the investigation and such other comments arising from the investigation as he thinks fit;
 - (B) if the investigation was initiated by a complaint, inform the complainant that the result of the investigation is that he is satisfied that the act or practice the subject of the investigation is not a contravention of a requirement under this Ordinance (or words to the like effect).

(Enacted 1995)

Section 50

Enforcement notices

(1) Where, following the completion of an investigation, the Commissioner is of the opinion that the relevant data user-

- (a) is contravening a requirement under this Ordinance; or
- (b) has contravened such a requirement in circumstances that make it likely that the contravention will continue or be repeated,

then the Commissioner may serve on the relevant data user a notice in writing-

- (i) stating that he is of that opinion;

- (ii) specifying the requirement as to which he is of that opinion and the reasons why he is of that opinion;
- (iii) directing the data user to take such steps as are specified in the notice to remedy the contravention or, as the case may be, the matters occasioning it within such period (ending not earlier than the period specified in [subsection \(7\)](#) within which an appeal against the notice may be made) as is specified in the notice; and
- (iv) accompanied by a copy of this section.

(2) In deciding whether to serve an enforcement notice the Commissioner shall consider whether the contravention or matter to which the notice relates has caused or is likely to cause damage or distress to any individual who is the data subject of any personal data to which the contravention or matter, as the case may be, relates.

(3) The steps specified in an enforcement notice to remedy any contravention or matter to which the notice relates may be framed-

- (a) to any extent by reference to any approved code of practice;
- (b) so as to afford the relevant data user a choice between different ways of remedying the contravention or matter, as the case may be.

(4) Subject to [subsection \(5\)](#), the period specified in an enforcement notice for taking the steps specified in it shall not expire before the end of the period specified in [subsection \(7\)](#) within which an appeal against the notice may be made and, if such an appeal is made, those steps need not be taken pending the determination or withdrawal of the appeal.

(5) If the Commissioner is of the opinion that by reason of special circumstances the steps specified in an enforcement notice should be taken as a matter of urgency-

- (a) he may include a statement to that effect in the notice together with the reasons why he is of that opinion;
- (b) where such a statement is so included, [subsection \(4\)](#) shall not apply but the notice shall not require those steps to be taken before the end of the period of 7 days beginning with the date on which the notice was served.

(6) The Commissioner may cancel an enforcement notice by notice in writing served on the relevant data user.

(7) An appeal may be made to the Administrative Appeals Board against an enforcement notice by the relevant data user not later than 14 days after the notice was served.

(8) Where the Commissioner-

- (a) forms an opinion referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#) in respect of the relevant data user at any time before the completion of an investigation; and
- (b) is also of the opinion that, by reason of special circumstances, an enforcement notice should be served on the relevant data user as a matter of urgency,

he may so serve such notice notwithstanding that the investigation has not been completed and, in any such case-

- (i) the Commissioner shall, without prejudice to any other matters to be included in such notice, specify in the notice the reasons as to why he is of the opinion referred to in [paragraph \(b\)](#); and

- (ii) the other provisions of this Ordinance (including this section) shall be construed accordingly.

(Enacted 1995)

PART VIII EXEMPTIONS

Section 51 Interpretation

Where any personal data are exempt from any provision of this Ordinance by virtue of this Part, then, in respect of those data and to the extent of that exemption, that provision neither confers any right nor imposes any requirement on any person, and the other provisions of this Ordinance which relate (whether directly or indirectly) to that provision shall be construed accordingly.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 52 Domestic purposes

Personal data held by an individual and-

- (a) concerned only with the management of his personal, family or household affairs; or
- (b) so held only for recreational purposes,

are exempt from the provisions of the data protection principles, [Parts IV](#) and [V sections 36](#) and [38\(b\)](#).

(Enacted 1995)

Section 53 Employment — staff planning

Personal data which consist of information relevant to any staff planning proposal to-

- (a) fill any series of positions of employment which are presently, or may become, unfilled; or
- (b) cease any group of individuals' employment,

are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 6 and [section 18\(1\)\(b\)](#).

(Enacted 1995)

Section 54 Employment — transitional provisions

(1) Personal data-

- (a) held by a data user-

- (i) immediately before the appointed day;
 - (ii) who is the employer of the data subject; and
 - (iii) relating to the employment of the subject; and
- (b) provided by an individual on the implicit or explicit condition that the subject would not have access to the data,

are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 6 and [section 18\(1\)\(b\)](#) until the expiration of 7 years immediately following the enactment of this Ordinance.

(2) Personal data-

- (a) to which [subsection \(1\)\(a\)](#) applies; or
- (b) held by a data user-
 - (i) but not so held at any time before the appointed day;
 - (ii) who is the employer of the data subject; and
 - (iii) relating to the employment of the subject,

are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 6 and [section 18\(1\)\(b\)](#) until 1 July 1996.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 55 Relevant process

(1) Personal data the subject of a relevant process are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 6 and [section 18\(1\)\(b\)](#) until the completion of that process.

(2) In this section-

“completion”, in relation to a relevant process, means the making of the determination concerned referred to in [paragraph \(a\)](#) of the definition of “relevant process”;

“relevant process”-

- (a) subject to [paragraph \(b\)](#), means any process whereby personal data are considered by one or more persons for the purpose of determining, or enabling there to be determined-
 - (i) the suitability, eligibility or qualifications of the data subject for-
 - (A) employment or appointment to office;
 - (B) promotion in employment or office or continuance in employment or office;
 - (C) removal from employment or office; or
 - (D) the awarding of contracts, awards (including academic and professional qualifications), scholarships, honours or other benefits;
 - (ii) whether any contract, award (including academic and professional qualifications), scholarship, honour or benefit relating to the data subject should be continued, modified or cancelled; or

- (iii) whether any disciplinary action should be taken against the data subject for a breach of the terms of his employment or appointment to office;
- (b) does not include any such process where no appeal, whether under an Ordinance or otherwise, may be made against any such determination.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 56 Personal references

Personal data held by a data user which consist of a personal reference-

- (a) given by an individual other than in the ordinary course of his occupation; and
- (b) relevant to another individual's suitability or otherwise to fill any position of employment or office which is presently, or may become, unfilled,

are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 6 and [section 18\(1\)\(b\)](#)-

- (i) in any case, unless the individual referred to in [paragraph \(a\)](#) has informed the data user in writing that he has no objection to the reference being seen by the individual referred to in [paragraph \(b\)](#) (or words to the like effect); or
- (ii) in the case of a reference given on or after the day on which this section comes into operation, until the individual referred to in [paragraph \(b\)](#) has been informed in writing that he has been accepted or rejected to fill that position or office (or words to the like effect),
whichever first occurs.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 57 Security, etc. in respect of Hong Kong

Remarks:

Adaptation amendments retroactively made — see 34 of 1999 s. 3

(1) Personal data held by or on behalf of the Government for the purposes of safeguarding security, defence or international relations in respect of Hong Kong are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 6 and [section 18\(1\)\(b\)](#) where the application of those provisions to the data would be likely to prejudice any of the matters referred to in this subsection.

(2) Personal data are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 3 in any case in which-

- (a) the use of the data is for any of the purposes referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#) (and whether or not the data are held for any of those purposes); and
- (b) the application of those provisions in relation to such use would be likely to prejudice any of the matters referred to in that subsection,

and in any proceedings against any person for a contravention of any of those provisions it shall be a defence to show that he had reasonable grounds for believing that failure to so use the data would have been likely to prejudice any of those matters.

(3) Any question whether an exemption under [subsection \(1\)](#) is or at any time was required in respect of any personal data may be determined by the Chief Executive or Chief Secretary for Administration; and a certificate signed by the Chief Executive or Chief Secretary for Administration certifying that the exemption is or at any time was so required shall be evidence of that fact. (Amended L.N. 362 of 1997; 34 of 1999 s. 3)

(4) For the purposes of [subsection \(2\)](#), a certificate signed by the Chief Executive or Chief Secretary for Administration certifying that personal data are or have been used for any purpose referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#) shall be evidence of that fact. (Amended L.N. 362 of 1997; 34 of 1999 s. 3)

(5) The Chief Executive or Chief Secretary for Administration may, in a certificate referred to in [subsection \(3\)](#) or [\(4\)](#), in respect of the personal data to which the certificate relates and for the reasons specified in that certificate, direct the Commissioner not to carry out an inspection or investigation and, in any such case, the Commissioner shall comply with the direction. (Amended L.N. 362 of 1997; 34 of 1999 s. 3)

(6) A document purporting to be a certificate referred to in [subsection \(3\)](#) or [\(4\)](#) shall be received in evidence and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, shall be deemed to be such a certificate.

(7) In this section-

“international relations” includes relations with any international organization;

“security” includes the prevention or preclusion of persons (including persons detained in accordance with the provisions of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap 115)) entering and remaining in Hong Kong who do not have the right to enter and remain in Hong Kong.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 58 Crime, etc.

(1) Personal data held for the purposes of-

- (a) the prevention or detection of crime;
- (b) the apprehension, prosecution or detention of offenders;
- (c) the assessment or collection of any tax or duty;
- (d) the prevention, preclusion or remedying (including punishment) of unlawful or seriously improper conduct, or dishonesty or malpractice, by persons;
- (e) the prevention or preclusion of significant financial loss arising from-
 - (i) any imprudent business practices or activities of persons; or
 - (ii) unlawful or seriously improper conduct, or dishonesty or malpractice, by persons;
- (f) ascertaining whether the character or activities of the data subject are likely to have a significantly adverse impact on any thing-

- (i) to which the discharge of statutory functions by the data user relates; or
 - (ii) which relates to the discharge of functions to which this paragraph applies by virtue of [subsection \(3\)](#); or
- (g) discharging functions to which this paragraph applies by virtue of [subsection \(3\)](#), are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 6 and [section 18\(1\)\(b\)](#) where the application of those provisions to the data would be likely to-
- (i) prejudice any of the matters referred to in this subsection; or
 - (ii) directly or indirectly identify the person who is the source of the data.

(2) Personal data are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 3 in any case in which-

- (a) the use of the data is for any of the purposes referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#) (and whether or not the data are held for any of those purposes); and
- (b) the application of those provisions in relation to such use would be likely to prejudice any of the matters referred to in that subsection,

and in any proceedings against any person for a contravention of any of those provisions it shall be a defence to show that he had reasonable grounds for believing that failure to so use the data would have been likely to prejudice any of those matters.

(3) [Paragraphs \(f\)\(ii\)](#) and [\(g\) of subsection \(1\)](#) apply to any functions of a financial regulator-

- (a) for protecting members of the public against financial loss arising from-
 - (i) dishonesty, incompetence, malpractice or seriously improper conduct by persons-
 - (A) concerned in the provision of banking, insurance, investment or other financial services;
 - (B) concerned in the management of companies;
 - (BA) concerned in the administration of provident fund schemes registered under the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Ordinance (Cap 485); (Added 4 of 1998 s. 14)
 - (C) concerned in the management of occupational retirement schemes within the meaning of the Occupational Retirement Schemes Ordinance (Cap 426); or
 - (D) who are shareholders in companies; or
 - (ii) the conduct of discharged or undischarged bankrupts;
- (b) for maintaining or promoting the general stability or effective working of any of the systems which provide any of the services referred to in [paragraph \(a\)\(i\)\(A\)](#); or
- (c) specified for the purposes of this subsection in a notice under [subsection \(4\)](#).

(4) For the purposes of [subsection \(3\)](#), the Chief Executive may, by notice in the Gazette, specify a function of a financial regulator. (Amended 34 of 1999 s. 3)

(5) It is hereby declared that-

- (a) [subsection \(3\)](#) shall not operate to prejudice the generality of the operation of [paragraphs \(a\), \(b\), \(c\), \(d\)](#) and [\(f\)\(i\) of subsection \(1\)](#) in relation to a financial regulator;
- (b) a notice under [subsection \(4\)](#) is subsidiary legislation.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 59 Health

Personal data relating to the physical or mental health of the data subject are exempt from the provisions of either or both of-

- (a) data protection principle 6 and [section 18\(1\)\(b\)](#);
- (b) data protection principle 3,

in any case in which the application of those provisions to the data would be likely to cause serious harm to the physical or mental health of-

- (i) the data subject; or
- (ii) any other individual.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 60 Legal professional privilege

Personal data are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 6 and [section 18\(1\)\(b\)](#) if the data consist of information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in law.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 61 News

(1) Personal data held by a data user-

- (a) whose business, or part of whose business, consists of a news activity; and
- (b) solely for the purpose of that activity (or any directly related activity), are exempt from the provisions of-
 - (i) data protection principle 6 and [sections 18\(1\)\(b\)](#) and [38\(i\)](#) unless and until the data are published or broadcast (wherever and by whatever means);
 - (ii) [sections 36](#) and [38\(b\)](#).

(2) Personal data are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 3 in any case in which-

- (a) the use of the data consists of disclosing the data to a data user referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#); and

- (b) such disclosure is made by a person who has reasonable grounds to believe (and reasonably believes) that the publishing or broadcasting (wherever and by whatever means) of the data (and whether or not they are published or broadcast) is in the public interest.
- (3) In this section-
- “news activity” means any journalistic activity and includes-
- (a) the-
- (i) gathering of news;
 - (ii) preparation or compiling of articles or programmes concerning news; or
 - (iii) observations on news or current affairs, for the purpose of dissemination to the public; or
- (b) the dissemination to the public of-
- (i) any article or programme of or concerning news; or
 - (ii) observations on news or current affairs.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 62

Statistics and research

Personal data are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 3 where-

- (a) the data are to be used for preparing statistics or carrying out research;
- (b) the data are not to be used for any other purpose; and
- (c) the resulting statistics or results of the research are not made available in a form which identifies the data subjects or any of them.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 63

Exemption from section 18(1)(a)

Where a data access request relates to personal data which are or, if the data existed, would be exempt from [section 18\(1\)\(b\)](#) by virtue of [section 57](#) or [58](#), then the data are also exempt from [section 18\(1\)\(a\)](#) if the interest protected by that exemption would be likely to be prejudiced by the disclosure of the existence or non-existence of those data.

(Enacted 1995)

PART IX

OFFENCES AND COMPENSATION

Section 64

Offences

- (1) A data user who, in any-
- (a) data user return submitted under [section 14\(4\)](#) to the Commissioner;
 - (b) notice under [section 14\(8\)](#) served on the Commissioner; or
 - (c) notice under [section 15\(3\)](#) or [\(4\)](#) submitted to or served on the Commissioner, knowingly or recklessly supplies any information-
 - (i) which is false or misleading in a material particular; and
 - (ii) in purported compliance with that section,

commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine at level 3 and to imprisonment for 6 months.

(2) A person who, in any data access request or data correction request, supplies any information-

- (a) which is false or misleading in a material particular; and
- (b) which is so supplied for the purpose of having the data user concerned comply with the request,

commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine at level 3 and to imprisonment for 6 months.

(3) A person who, in any notice under [section 15\(6\)](#) served on the Commissioner, supplies any information-

- (a) which is false or misleading in a material particular; and
- (b) which is so supplied for the purpose of having the Commissioner comply with the request to which the notice relates,

commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine at level 3 and to imprisonment for 6 months.

(4) A data user who, in any matching procedure request submitted to the Commissioner, supplies any information-

- (a) which is false or misleading in a material particular; and
- (b) which is so supplied for the purpose of having the Commissioner consent to the matching procedure to which the request relates,

commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine at level 3 and to imprisonment for 6 months.

(5) A data user (including a data user first-mentioned in [section 32\(2\)](#)) who contravenes any condition specified in a notice under [section 30\(2\)](#) or [32\(1\)\(b\)\(i\)](#) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine at level 3.

(6) Any person who contravenes [section 44\(3\)](#) or [46\(1\)](#) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine at level 3 and to imprisonment for 6 months.

(7) Subject to [subsection \(8\)](#), any relevant data user who contravenes an enforcement notice served on the data user commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine at level 5 and to imprisonment for 2 years and, in the case of a continuing offence, to a daily penalty of \$1000.

(8) It shall be a defence for a relevant data user charged with an offence under [subsection \(7\)](#) to show that the data user exercised all due diligence to comply with the enforcement notice concerned.

(9) Any person who-

- (a) without lawful excuse, obstructs, hinders or resists the Commissioner or any other person in the performance of his functions or the exercise of his powers under [Part VII](#);
- (b) without lawful excuse, fails to comply with any lawful requirement of the Commissioner or any other person under that Part; or
- (c) makes a statement which he knows to be false or does not believe to be true, or otherwise knowingly misleads the Commissioner or any other person in the performance of his functions or the exercise of his powers under that Part,

commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine at level 3 and to imprisonment for 6 months.

(10) A data user who, without reasonable excuse, contravenes any requirement under this Ordinance

(other than a contravention of a data protection principle) for which no other penalty is specified in this section commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine at level 3.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 65 Liability of employers and principals

(1) Any act done or practice engaged in by a person in the course of his employment shall be treated for the purposes of this Ordinance as done or engaged in by his employer as well as by him, whether or not it was done or engaged in with the employer's knowledge or approval.

(2) Any act done or practice engaged in by a person as agent for another person with the authority (whether express or implied, and whether precedent or subsequent) of that other person shall be treated for the purposes of this Ordinance as done or engaged in by that other person as well as by him.

(3) In proceedings brought under this Ordinance against any person in respect of an act or practice alleged to have been done or engaged in, as the case may be, by an employee of his it shall be a defence for that person to prove that he took such steps as were practicable to prevent the employee from doing that act or engaging in that practice, or from doing or engaging in, in the course of his employment, acts or practices, as the case may be, of that description.

(4) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that this section shall not apply for the purposes of any criminal proceedings.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 66 Compensation

(1) Subject to [subsection \(4\)](#), an individual who suffers damage by reason of a contravention-

- (a) of a requirement under this Ordinance;
- (b) by a data user; and
- (c) which relates, whether in whole or in part, to personal data of which that individual is the data subject,

shall be entitled to compensation from that data user for that damage.

(2) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that damage referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#) may be or include injury to feelings.

(3) In any proceedings brought against any person by virtue of this section it shall be a defence to show that-

- (a) he had taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to avoid the contravention concerned; or
- (b) in any case where the contravention concerned occurred because the personal data concerned were inaccurate, the data accurately record data received or obtained by the data user concerned from the data subject or a third party.

(4) Where an individual suffers damage referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#) by reason of a contravention referred to in that subsection which occurred because the personal data concerned were inaccurate, then no compensation shall be payable under that subsection in respect of so much of that damage that has occurred at any time before the expiration of 1 year immediately following the day on which this section commences.

(Enacted 1995)

PART X MISCELLANEOUS

Section 67 Power of Commissioner to specify forms

(1) Subject to [subsection \(2\)](#), the Commissioner may specify the form of any document required under this Ordinance to be in the specified form and the form of such other documents required for the purposes of this Ordinance as he thinks fit.

(2) The Commissioner's power under [subsection \(1\)](#) shall be subject to any express requirement under this Ordinance for a form, whether specified or otherwise, to comply with that requirement, but that requirement shall not restrict the exercise of that power in respect of that form to the extent that, in the opinion of the Commissioner, his exercise of that power in respect of that form does not contravene that requirement.

(3) The Commissioner's power under [subsection \(1\)](#) may be exercised in such a way as to-

- (a) include in the specified form of any document referred to in that subsection a statutory declaration-
 - (i) to be made by the person completing the form; and
 - (ii) as to whether the particulars contained in the form are true and correct to the best of that person's knowledge and belief;

- (b) specify 2 or more forms of any document referred to in that subsection, whether as alternatives, or to provide for particular circumstances or particular cases, as the Commissioner thinks fit.
- (4) A form specified under this section shall be-
 - (a) completed in accordance with such directions and instructions as are specified in the form;
 - (b) accompanied by such documents as are specified in the form; and
 - (c) if the completed form is required to be provided to-
 - (i) the Commissioner;
 - (ii) another person on behalf of the Commissioner; or
 - (iii) any other person,

so provided in the manner, if any, specified in the form.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 68 Service of notices

A notice (howsoever described) which is required to be served under this Ordinance, or which may be served under this Ordinance, on a person (howsoever described) shall, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, be deemed to be so served if-

- (a) in the case of an individual, it is-
 - (i) delivered to him;
 - (ii) left at his last known address for service, or at his last known place of residence or business, in Hong Kong;
 - (iii) sent by post to him at his last known address for service, or at his last known postal address, in Hong Kong; or
 - (iv) sent by telex, facsimile transmission or other similar method to him at his last known address for service, or at his last known postal address, or at his last known place of residence or business, in Hong Kong;
- (b) in the case of a company, it is-
 - (i) given to or served on an officer of the company;
 - (ii) left at the company's last known address for service, or at its last known place of business, in Hong Kong;
 - (iii) sent by post to the company at its last known address for service, or at its last known postal address, in Hong Kong; or
 - (iv) sent by telex, facsimile transmission or other similar method to the company at its last known address for service, or at its last known postal address, or at its last known place of business, in Hong Kong;
- (c) in the case of a partnership, it is-

- (i) delivered, left or sent in accordance with [paragraph \(a\)](#) in respect of any partner who is an individual; or
- (ii) given, served, left or sent in accordance with [paragraph \(b\)](#) in respect of any partner which is a company;
- (d) in the case of a person (“attorney”) holding a power of attorney under which the attorney is authorized to accept service in respect of another person, it is-
 - (i) delivered, left or sent in accordance with [paragraph \(a\)](#) where the attorney is an individual;
 - (ii) given, served, left or sent in accordance with [paragraph \(b\)](#) where the attorney is a company;
 - (iii) delivered, left or sent in accordance with [paragraph \(a\)](#) in respect of any partner who is an individual where the attorney is a partnership; or
 - (iv) given, served, left or sent in accordance with [paragraph \(b\)](#) in respect of any partner which is a company where the attorney is a partnership.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 69 Regulations — fees

(1) The Commissioner may make regulations to prescribe the fees to be paid in respect of any matter, service or facility in respect of which a prescribed fee is payable to the Commissioner under this Ordinance.

(2) The amount of any fee prescribed in regulations made under [subsection \(1\)](#) shall not be limited by reference to the amount of administrative or other costs incurred or likely to be incurred in relation to providing the matter, service or facility to which such fee relates, and different fees may be so prescribed for the same matter, service or facility in order to provide for particular circumstances or particular cases specified in the regulations.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 70 Regulations — general

(1) The Secretary for Home Affairs may make regulations for all or any of the following matters-

- (a) the particulars to be entered in the log book of a data user, including particulars referred to in [section 27\(2\)\(a\)](#), [\(b\)](#) and

(c);

- (b) prescribing anything that is required or permitted to be prescribed under this Ordinance.

(2) Any regulations made under this section may-

- (a) empower the Commissioner to grant exemptions from the regulations, either generally or in a particular case;

- (b) make different provisions for different circumstances and provide for a particular case or class of case;
- (c) be made so as to apply only in such circumstances as are prescribed by the regulations.

(3) Any regulations made under this section may prescribe offences in respect of contraventions of the regulations, and may provide for the imposition in respect of any such offence of a fine not exceeding level 3 and of imprisonment for a period not exceeding 2 years and, in the case of a continuing offence, to a daily penalty not exceeding \$1000.

(Enacted 1995)

Section 71 **Amendment of Schedules 2, 4 and 6**

Remarks:

Adaptation amendments retroactively made — see 34 of 1999 s. 3

The Chief Executive in Council may, by notice in the Gazette, amend [Schedule 2, 4 or 6](#).
(Enacted 1995. Amended 34 of 1999 s. 3)

Section 72 **(Omitted as spent)**

(Omitted as spent)

(Enacted 1995)

Section 73 **(Omitted as spent)**

(Omitted as spent)

(Enacted 1995)

Schedule 1 **DATA PROTECTION PRINCIPLES**

[sections 2(1) & (6)]

1. Principle 1-purpose and manner of collection of personal data

(1) Personal data shall not be collected unless-

- (a) the data are collected for a lawful purpose directly related to a function or activity of the data user who is to use the data;
- (b) subject to [paragraph \(c\)](#), the collection of the data is necessary for or directly related to that purpose; and

- (c) the data are adequate but not excessive in relation to that purpose.
- (2) Personal data shall be collected by means which are-
 - (a) lawful; and
 - (b) fair in the circumstances of the case.
- (3) Where the person from whom personal data are or are to be collected is the data subject, all practicable steps shall be taken to ensure that-
 - (a) he is explicitly or implicitly informed, on or before collecting the data, of-
 - (i) whether it is obligatory or voluntary for him to supply the data; and
 - (ii) where it is obligatory for him to supply the data, the consequences for him if he fails to supply the data; and
 - (b) he is explicitly informed-
 - (i) on or before collecting the data, of-
 - (A) the purpose (in general or specific terms) for which the data are to be used; and
 - (B) the classes of persons to whom the data may be transferred; and
 - (ii) on or before first use of the data for the purpose for which they were collected, of-
 - (A) his rights to request access to and to request the correction of the data; and
 - (B) the name and address of the individual to whom any such request may be made, unless to comply with the provisions of this subsection would be likely to prejudice the purpose for which the data were collected and that purpose is specified in [Part VIII](#) of this Ordinance as a purpose in relation to which personal data are exempt from the provisions of data protection principle 6.

2. Principle 2-accuracy and duration of retention of personal data

- (1) All practicable steps shall be taken to ensure that-
 - (a) personal data are accurate having regard to the purpose (including any directly related purpose) for which the personal data are or are to be used;
 - (b) where there are reasonable grounds for believing that personal data are inaccurate having regard to the purpose (including any directly related purpose) for which the data are or are to be used-
 - (i) the data are not used for that purpose unless and until those grounds cease to be applicable to the data, whether by the rectification of the data or otherwise; or
 - (ii) the data are erased;
 - (c) where it is practicable in all the circumstances of the case to know that-
 - (i) personal data disclosed on or after the appointed day to a third party are materially inaccurate having regard to the purpose (including any directly related purpose) for which the data are or are to be used by the third party; and
 - (ii) that data were inaccurate at the time of such disclosure, that the third party-
 - (A) is informed that the data are inaccurate; and

- (B) is provided with such particulars as will enable the third party to rectify the data having regard to that purpose.

(2) Personal data shall not be kept longer than is necessary for the fulfillment of the purpose (including any directly related purpose) for which the data are or are to be used.

3. Principle 3-use of personal data

Personal data shall not, without the prescribed consent of the data subject, be used for any purpose other than-

- (a) the purpose for which the data were to be used at the time of the collection of the data; or
- (b) a purpose directly related to the purpose referred to in [paragraph \(a\)](#).

4. Principle 4-security of personal data

All practicable steps shall be taken to ensure that personal data (including data in a form in which access to or processing of the data is not practicable) held by a data user are protected against unauthorized or accidental access, processing, erasure or other use having particular regard to-

- (a) the kind of data and the harm that could result if any of those things should occur;
- (b) the physical location where the data are stored;
- (c) any security measures incorporated (whether by automated means or otherwise) into any equipment in which the data are stored;
- (d) any measures taken for ensuring the integrity, prudence and competence of persons having access to the data; and
- (e) any measures taken for ensuring the secure transmission of the data.

5. Principle 5-information to be generally available

All practicable steps shall be taken to ensure that a person can-

- (a) ascertain a data user's policies and practices in relation to personal data;
- (b) be informed of the kind of personal data held by a data user;
- (c) be informed of the main purposes for which personal data held by a data user are or are to be used.

6. Principle 6-access to personal data

A data subject shall be entitled to-

- (a) ascertain whether a data user holds personal data of which he is the data subject;
- (b) request access to personal data-
 - (i) within a reasonable time;
 - (ii) at a fee, if any, that is not excessive;
 - (iii) in a reasonable manner; and
 - (iv) in a form that is intelligible;
- (c) be given reasons if a request referred to in [paragraph \(b\)](#) is refused;

- (d) object to a refusal referred to in [paragraph \(c\)](#);
- (e) request the correction of personal data;
- (f) be given reasons if a request referred to in [paragraph \(e\)](#) is refused; and
- (g) object to a refusal referred to in [paragraph \(f\)](#).

(Enacted 1995)

Schedule 2 FINANCES, ETC. OF COMMISSIONER

[sections 5(7), 10(2)(c) & 71]

1. Resources of Commissioner

- (1) The resources of the Commissioner shall consist of-
 - (a) all money-
 - (i) paid by the Government to the Commissioner and appropriated for that purpose by the Legislative Council; and
 - (ii) otherwise provided to the Commissioner by the Government; and
 - (b) all other money and property, including gifts, donations, fees, rent, interest and accumulations of income received by the Commissioner.

(2) The Secretary for the Treasury may give directions in writing of a general or specific character to the Commissioner in relation to the amount of money which may be expended by the Commissioner in any financial year and the Commissioner shall comply with those directions.

(3) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that any remuneration or other benefit payable to, and any expenses of-

- (a) the Commissioner; or
- (b) any person employed or engaged under [section 9\(1\)](#) of this Ordinance, shall be paid out of the resources of the Commissioner.

2. Borrowing powers

(1) Subject to [subsection \(2\)](#), the Commissioner may borrow by way of overdraft such money as he may require for meeting his obligations or performing his functions under this Ordinance.

(2) The Secretary for Home Affairs may, after consulting with the Secretary for the Treasury, give directions in writing of a general or specific character to the Commissioner in relation to the amount of money which may be borrowed under [subsection \(1\)](#) and the Commissioner shall comply with those directions.

(3) The Commissioner may with the approval of the Secretary for Home Affairs given after the Secretary has consulted with the Secretary for the Treasury borrow, otherwise than by way of overdraft, such money as he may require for meeting his obligations or performing his functions under this Ordinance.

(4) A person lending money to the Commissioner shall not be concerned to inquire whether the borrowing of the money is legal or regular or whether the money raised has been properly

applied and shall not be prejudiced by any illegality or irregularity or by misapplication or non-application of the money.

3. Investment of surplus funds

(1) Subject to [subsection \(2\)](#), the Commissioner may invest money that is not immediately required to be expended.

(2) The Commissioner shall not invest money pursuant to [subsection \(1\)](#) except in such forms of investment as the Secretary for Home Affairs, after consulting with the Secretary for the Treasury, approves.

(3) [Subsection \(1\)](#) shall not be subject to [section 10\(1\)](#) of this Ordinance.

4. Accounts, audit and annual report of Commissioner

(1) The Commissioner shall cause proper accounts to be kept of all his financial transactions.

(2) The Commissioner shall, as soon as practicable after the expiry of a financial year, prepare a statement of the accounts of the Commissioner, which statement shall include an income and expenditure account and a balance sheet.

(3) The Commissioner shall appoint an auditor who shall, as soon as practicable, audit the accounts required under [subsection \(1\)](#) and the statement of accounts required under [subsection \(2\)](#) and shall submit a report on the statement to the Commissioner.

(4) The Commissioner shall, as soon as practicable and in any case not later than 9 months after the expiry of a financial year (or such further period as the Chief Secretary for Administration allows), furnish-

- (a) a report on the activities of the Commissioner during that year including a general survey of developments, during that year, in respect of matters falling within the scope of the Commissioner's functions;
- (b) a copy of the statement of accounts required under [subsection \(2\)](#); and
- (c) the auditor's report on the statement, to the Chief Secretary for Administration who shall cause the same to be tabled in the Legislative Council. (Amended L.N. 362 of 1997)

(5) This section shall not be subject to [section 10\(1\)](#) of this Ordinance.

5. Director of Audit's examination

(1) The Director of Audit may, in respect of any financial year, conduct an examination into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which the Commissioner has expended his resources in performing his functions and exercising his powers.

(2) Subject to [subsection \(3\)](#), the Director of Audit shall have a right of access at all reasonable times to all such documents as he may reasonably require for conducting an examination under this section and shall be entitled to require from any person holding or being accountable for any such document such information and explanation as he considers reasonably necessary for that purpose.

(3) [Subsection \(2\)](#) applies only to documents in the custody and control of the Commissioner.

(4) The Director of Audit may report to the President of the Legislative Council the results of an examination conducted by him under this section.

(5) [Subsection \(1\)](#) shall not operate to entitle the Director of Audit to question the merits of the policy objectives of the Commissioner.

6. Exemption from taxation

(1) The Commissioner shall be exempt from taxation under the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap 112).

(2) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby declared that [subsection \(1\)](#) does not apply to or in relation to any remuneration, benefits or expenses referred to in [section 1\(3\)](#) paid out of the resources of the Commissioner to the Commissioner.

(Enacted 1995)

Schedule 3 PRESCRIBED INFORMATION

[section 14(10)]

1. The name and address of the data user.
2. A description of the kind of personal data in respect of which the data user is a data user.
3. A description of the purpose or purposes for which the personal data referred to in item 2 are or are to be collected, held, processed or used by the data user.
4. A description of any classes of persons to whom the data user discloses, intends to disclose or may wish to disclose the personal data referred to in item 2.
5. The names or a description of any places outside Hong Kong to which the data user transfers, intends to transfer or may wish to transfer, the personal data referred to in item 2.
6. The name and address of the individual to whom data access requests may be made to the data user.

(Enacted 1995)

Schedule 4 PROVISIONS OF ORDINANCES UNDER WHICH MATCHING PROCEDURES ARE REQUIRED OR PERMITTED

[sections 30(1)(d) & 71]

(Enacted 1995)

Schedule 5 PRESCRIBED MATTERS

[section 32(4)]

1. Whether the carrying out of the matching procedure is in the public interest.

2. The kind of personal data to be the subject of the matching procedure.
3. The likely consequences to a data subject if the matching procedure were to result in any adverse action taken against the data subject.
4. The practices and procedures, if any, that will be followed to enable a data subject to make a data correction request-
 - (a) in respect any of the personal data produced or verified by the matching procedure;
 - (b) before any adverse action is taken against the data subject.
5. The practices and procedures, if any, that will be followed to ensure, so far as is practicable, the accuracy of any personal data produced or verified by the matching procedure.
6. Whether any such data subject is to be informed of the procedure before it is first carried out.
7. Whether there is any practicable alternative to the matching procedure.
8. The benefits to be derived from carrying out the matching procedure.

(Enacted 1995)

Schedule 6

[sections 42(6), (7) & (11) & 71]

PART I

WARRANT AUTHORIZING PRIVACY COMMISSIONER FOR PERSONAL DATA TO ENTER SPECIFIED PREMISES WITHOUT INFORMING RELEVANT DATA USER

To the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data.

Having been satisfied by information upon oath/declaration* that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the purposes of an investigation under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap 486) in relation to [name of relevant data user] may be substantially prejudiced if you were required to comply with [section 42\(3\)](#) of that Ordinance before exercising your power under [section 42\(2\)](#) of that Ordinance in respect of the premises at

[address of premises occupied by the relevant data user/in which is situated the personal data system, or any part thereof, used by the relevant data user*]:

YOU ARE HEREBY AUTHORIZED, with such assistants as may be necessary, to exercise your power under [section 42\(2\)](#) of that Ordinance in respect of those premises without complying with [section 42\(3\)](#) of that Ordinance provided that such power is exercised before the expiration of 14 days after the data on which this warrant is issued.

Dated this day of 19

* Delete whichever is inapplicable.

* Delete whichever is inapplicable.



.....
(Signature) Magistrate

PART 2
*WARRANT AUTHORIZING PRIVACY COMMISSIONER FOR PERSONAL DATA
TO ENTER SPECIFIED DOMESTIC PREMISES*

To the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data.

Having been satisfied by information upon oath/declaration* that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the purposes of the investigation into [name of relevant data user] may be substantially prejudiced if you are prevented by the operation of [section 42\(4\)](#) of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap 486) from exercising your power under [section 42\(2\)](#) of that Ordinance in respect of the domestic premises at [address of domestic premises occupied by the relevant data user/in which is situated the personal data system, or any part thereof, used by the relevant data user*]:

YOU ARE HEREBY AUTHORIZED, with such assistants as may be necessary, to exercise that power in respect of those premises provided that such power is exercised before the expiration of 14 days after the data on which this warrant is issued.

Dated this day of 19

.....
(Signature) Magistrate

(Enacted 1995)

* Delete whichever is inapplicable.

* Delete whichever is inapplicable.