

Companies Registry News Update: New Inspection Regime

On 23 August 2021, the new inspection regime of the companies' registers under the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622) came into effect.

The new inspection regime has been implemented in three phases as below:

Phase 1 - effective 23 August 2021

- Companies are **optional** to withhold from public inspection the usual residential addresses ("URAs") of directors and full identification numbers ("IDNs") of directors and company secretaries as contained in **the registers of directors and registers of company secretaries kept by the companies**; and
- In such cases, the companies are to make available for public inspection on their own registers correspondence addresses ("CAs") of directors ^(Note 1), and partials IDNs of directors and company secretaries.

Phase 2 – effective 24 October 2022

- The URAs and full IDNs of directors on the registers **maintained by the Companies Registry ("Registers")** will be replaced with CAs and partial IDNs of directors for public inspection;
- The URAs of directors and full IDNs of directors, company secretaries and some other individuals (e.g. liquidators) ("**Protected Information**") contained in documents delivered to the Company Registry for registration on or after the commencement of Phase 2 will not be provided for public inspection;
- "Specified persons" may apply to access Protected Information;
- Companies must enter the CAs of directors into the register of directors kept by the companies;
- The address of the registered office of a local company or the address of the principal place of business in Hong Kong of a non-Hong Kong company is to be regarded as CAs of directors unless a Form ND2B / Form NN7 in relation to the specified director's correspondence address is filed with the Company Registry; and
- Post office box number cannot be used as the CA of a director.

Phase 3 – effective 27 December 2023

- Existing or former directors or company secretaries of companies may apply to the Company Registry to withhold from public inspection the URAs contained in documents delivered to the Company Registry before, on or after the commencement of Phase 3;
- All data subject (including a shareholder of a company) may apply to the Company Registry to withhold from public inspection the full IDNs contained in registered documents with the Company Registry;
- If the application is approved, the applicant's URA and full IDN will be withheld from public inspection (the "**Withheld Information**") while the applicant's CA contained in the application and partial IDN will be made available for public inspection respectively; and
- "Specified persons" may apply to access the Withheld Information / Protected Information through the Company Registry's new e-Services Portal.

Note:

1. Director of a company refers to a natural person director and includes a reserve director.

To view the full details of the Companies Registry's external circulars in respect of the following:

- Commencement of Phase 1: please click [HERE](#)
- Commencement of Phase 2: please click [HERE](#)
- Commencement of Phase 3: please click [HERE](#)