

## News Clipping

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Lands Department workers begin clearance in areas near Tai Tam Bay. SINGTAO

# Clearance begins at beach squatter areas

## Phoenix Un

The Lands Department has moved to clear illegally reconstructed squatter areas near Tai Tam Bay in the south of Hong Kong Island.

Its order for the squat owners to stop occupying government land expired yesterday, but removing the illegal structures has since been slow.

A dozen workers were sent to the Tung Ah Pui Village at 10am yesterday for clearance works, including the parcel occupied by former assistant labor commissioner Mak Sai-yiu.

Workers took away flower pots and other plants in Mak's garden, replacing them with government notices outlining unlawful occupation, dumping and excavation.

Workers stuck notices on larger objects, telling owners to remove them before tomorrow.

Objects in the garden of Wong How-man, president of the China Exploration and Research Society, were also relocated. A tree house was demolished.

Similar clearance work was also carried out at the garden of businessman Chan Boon-kiew.

The Lands Department inspected Tung Ah Pui Village on Friday, finding that government land was being used illegally as gardens and storage.

The government had ordered people illegally occupying the land in the village to relocate by tomorrow.

The government surveyed squatter areas in Hong Kong in 1976 and 1982, recording the area, height, material and information of residents.



"Squats are illegal constructions occupying government land, documents show that squats were only temporary buildings. The government tolerated such illegal constructions, but they can't be expanded, and only necessary and suitable maintenance are allowed," said Vincent Ho Kui-yip, the immediate past president of the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors.

As the ownership of the squatter area always belongs to the government, Ho said, buyers of the site can never become its official proprietors.

Environmental group Green Sense said four piers along the coastline of Tung Ah Pui Village have existed since 2006, according to satellite pictures.

Chief executive Roy Tam Hoi-pong said the area fell into the coastal protection area according to the Outline Zoning Plan, and no development should be allowed.

However, Tam said the government may not be able to take legal action against squatters.  
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