

Small Practice Clinic



Letter of
exemption



Small Practice Clinic

Office for Regulation of Private Healthcare Facilities
Department of Health



Meaning of clinic



Premises where registered medical practitioners or registered dentists provide medical services **without lodging**



Continuous confinement of patients within the clinic **should not exceed 12 hours**



Cannot provide the **scheduled medical procedures** specified in the Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance (PHFO) or the **hospital-only medical procedures** stipulated in the "Code of Practice for Day Procedure Centres"



Meaning of small practice clinic (SPC)

- Clinics operated only by registered medical practitioner(s) or registered dentist(s)
- The operation may be in the form of a sole proprietorship, a partnership or a company
- The following three necessary conditions must also be met:

**1. Number of
doctors or
dentists**



**2. The exclusive
right of operators
to use the
premises**

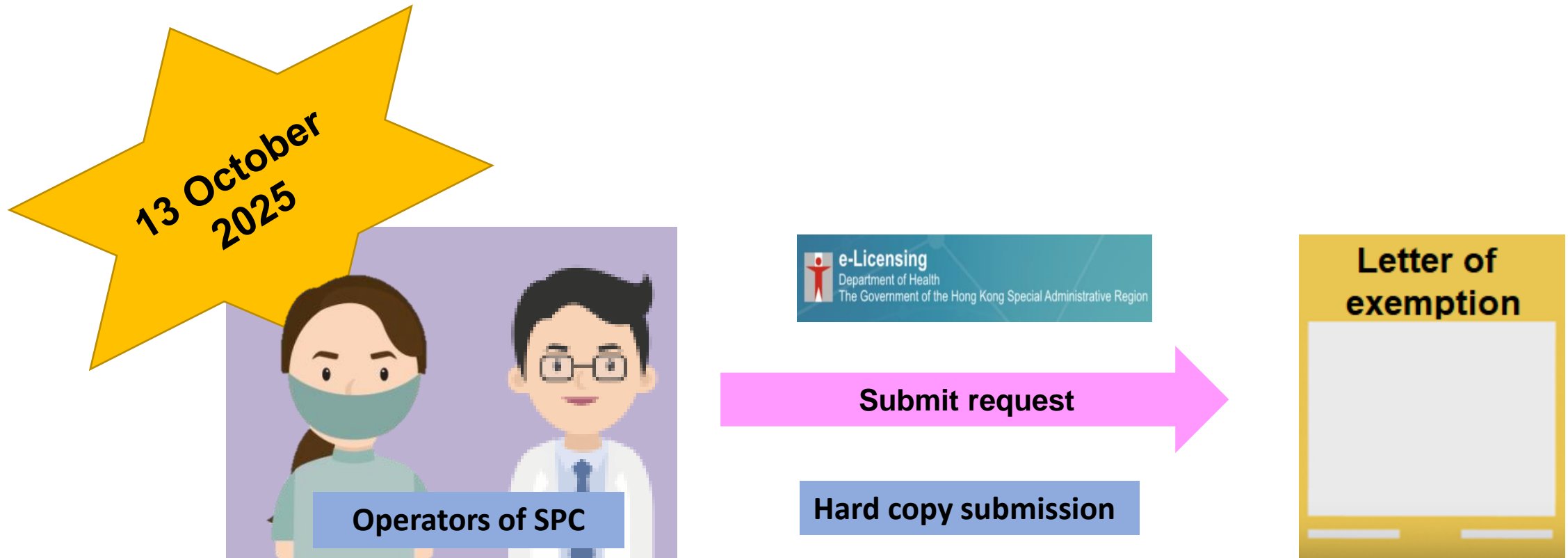


**3. Locum
arrangements**



Letter of exemption for SPC

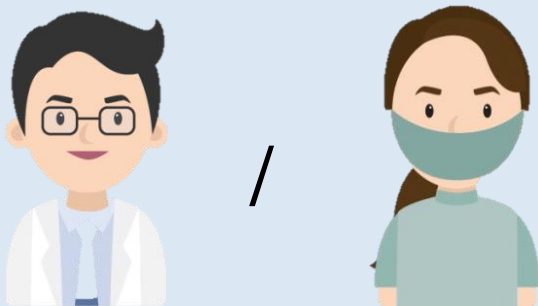
Under the PHFO, an SPC may request for an exemption from licensing starting from 13 October 2025.



1. Number of doctors or dentists

SPC operated under a sole proprietorship

- The sole proprietor must be a registered medical practitioner or a registered dentist



SPC operated under a partnership or a company

- A maximum of five partners or company directors
- All partners or company directors must be registered medical practitioners or registered dentists




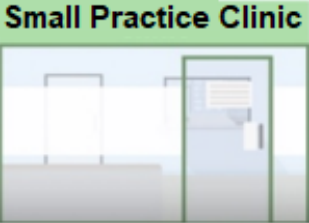
2. The exclusive right of operators to use the premises

The sole proprietor of the sole proprietorship, at least one partner of the partnership, or at least one director of the company, shall have **exclusive rights to use the premises** forming the SPC.

Except for the operator(s) and locum arrangements, **other doctors or dentists are not allowed** to practise in the clinic.



3. Locum arrangements

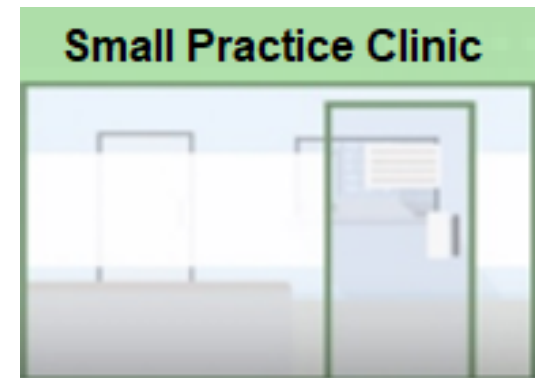
	Every registered medical practitioner or registered dentist operating the SPC	The total number of locum days must not exceed 60 days in a year
	All the partners or directors operating the SPC	The aggregate number of locum days must not exceed 180 days in a year



Requirements on the premises

To be **eligible for an exemption**, an SPC must conform to the **requirements of the PHFO on the premises**.

The operator must ensure that the SPC is a **distinct and exclusive** premises.



Requirements of the premises

If there are services **not reasonably incidental to the purpose of the medical or dental practice**,

the operator must ensure that the SPC is **separated** from the premises where such services are provided,

and that the SPC has a **direct and separate entrance**.

- Services provided by **dietitians and physiotherapists** may in principle fall within the scope of being **reasonably incidental** to the purpose of the exempted practice
- Subject to any **specific circumstances** pertaining to those practices in **individual cases**

- On the contrary, **beauty services** are generally considered as being **not reasonably incidental** to the purpose of the exempted practice
- The SPC must be **separated** from the premises where such services are provided
- Must also have **separate entrances**
- Otherwise, the clinic cannot operate under the PHFO



 My clinic falls under the meaning of an SPC specified under section 41 of the PHFO. Can I continue to practise in the clinic without taking any action?

Although the PHFO allows an SPC to be exempted from the requirement of a licence, the person operating an SPC must still ask the Director of Health (DoH) for a **letter of exemption**.

All scheduled clinics listed in Schedule 6 to the PHFO are required to apply for a licence. There are no exemption arrangements.

All persons requesting for a letter of exemption are required to submit the duly completed form(s) together with the required documents to the Department of Health according to the instructions. There is an electronic platform in place to simplify the procedures for operators to submit the requests. Such requests can be made from 13 October 2025.

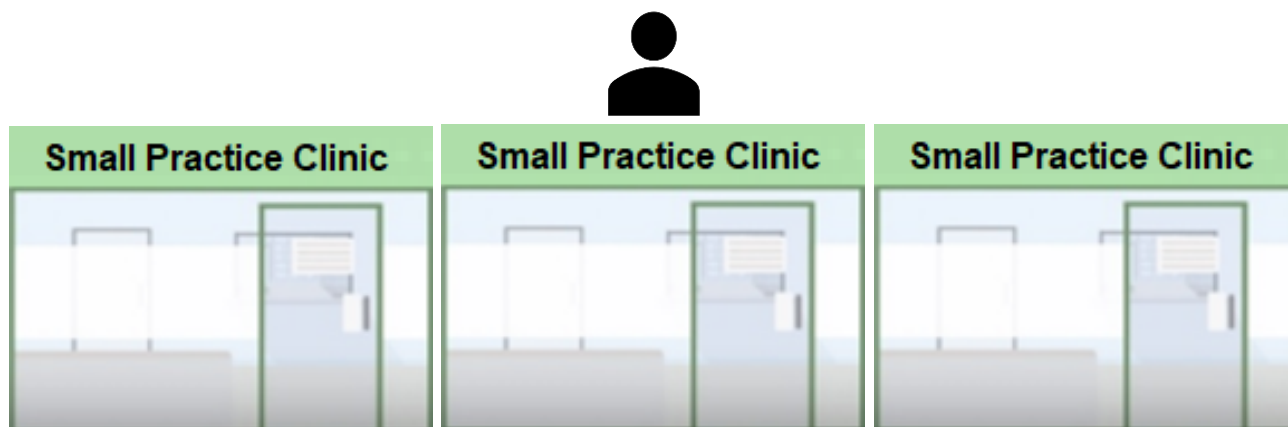
Details have been announced on the website of the Office for Regulation of Private Healthcare Facilities.



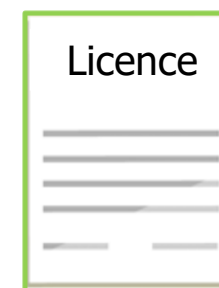
? I am currently operating several SPCs, can all of these SPCs be exempted?

There is a limit on the number of clinics each operator may request exemption for.

Whether operating an SPC under a sole proprietorship, a partnership or a company, each registered medical practitioner or registered dentist can have **up to three SPCs exempted at the same time**. They will have to apply for a licence for the fourth or subsequent clinics.



> 3 SPCs →

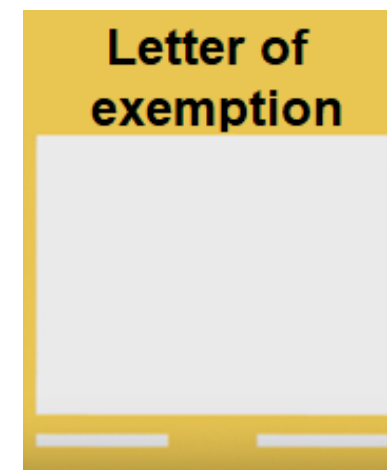


Apply for a licence



? Does a letter of exemption need to be renewed?

Unless the clinic is relocated, ceased operation, no longer falls under the meaning of an SPC, or the exemption is revoked by DoH, the letter of exemption for an exempted clinic will remain valid.





What rules do I have to follow after obtaining a letter of exemption?

Operators of exempted clinics must comply with all relevant requirements for an SPC and its operation under the PHFO at all times.

If there are any **intended changes** of the clinic (e.g. a change in the operators or relocation of the clinic), **intended cessation of the clinic's operation**, or **intended cessation of the clinic's operation as an SPC**,

the operator must give DoH **not less than 14 days' notice in writing**, and may have to request for an exemption again or apply for a licence.



Further details are available at www.orphf.gov.hk

